

California
ional
lity



UCSB LIBRARY

X-54015

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE CELESTIA STORIES.



BOSTON.

WILLIAM V SPENCER.



THE CROOK STRAIGHTENED.

By MRS. MARTHA E. BERRY,

AUTHOR OF "CROOKED AND STRAIGHT," "CELESTA," ETC.



BOSTON:
WILLIAM V. SPENCER.
1868.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868, by

WILLIAM V. SPENCER,

In the Clerk's office of the District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

ROCKWELL & ROLLINS, PRINTERS AND STEREOTYPERS,

122 Washington Street, Boston.

PREFACE.



THIS second volume of Jotham's history, which is founded in truth, is now offered to the public, with the hope that those boys who get the wild fancy that some other place is better than home, may pause and think before they leave a mother's tender care, or a father's judicious corrections. Better is home discipline than a stranger's.

CELESTA STORIES.



I. — CELESTA.

II. — CROOKED AND STRAIGHT.

III. — THE CROOK STRAIGHTENED.

CONTENTS.



	CHAPTER I.	PAGE
BEFORE MIDNIGHT		9
	CHAPTER II.	
THE GLOOMY DAY		28
	CHAPTER III.	
FINDING A HOME		47
	CHAPTER IV.	
THANKSGIVING		66
	CHAPTER V.	
FIRST TRIAL AT WORK		85
	CHAPTER VI.	
CHURNING AND PUMPING		104
	CHAPTER VII.	
THE NEW CLOTHES		123
	CHAPTER VIII.	
JOTHAM'S THANKSGIVING		143

CHAPTER IX.

CHOPPING AND ITS EFFECTS	162
------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER X.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS	181
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

HOPE LOST	201
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

ELLEN JORDAN	221
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

SUDDEN DEPARTURE	242
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

HOME	262
----------------	-----

THE CROOK STRAIGHTENED.

THE CROOK STRAIGHTENED.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE MIDNIGHT.

ERY cold and cheerless it seemed on that country road. The evening was frosty; there were no singing-birds enlivening the twilight, no hum of insects lulling the ear. The songsters had gone to their southern homes, the crickets and the locusts had been chilled by the autumnal blasts, and there was silence in nature's laboratory.

To Jotham this silence was terribly oppressive. Not a sound greeted his ear save the occasional merry voices of children as he passed a house where was a happy circle; and these notes fell painfully upon his ear, for they reminded him that he was now homeless. He remembered how often he and Harry had made their home vocal with laughter, and then he thought sadly that for him there was a home no more. He was a runaway.

He was now six miles from the city, half way between two villages, and the large barns surrounded by broad fields told him that he was in a region of farmers. Comforts appeared plentiful in the houses he passed; but for him there were none. Supperless he walked on; for what else could he do? It was too cold to stand still, or to sit down to rest. The wind pierced through his jacket; he shivered, and hunger grew imperious. The absence of street-lights, to which he had always been accustomed, added to the gloom.

The boy's knowledge of country-life had been derived principally from his visits at his grandfather's farm, and as these had been always in the summer, he had no idea that a rural road could seem so dreary and desolate. The trees, stripped of their verdure, were far less inviting than when their rustling leaves enticed travellers to their shades on a warm day; and the grass, embrowned by frosts, seemed to have lost its velvety softness. Few carriages were passing, and these, in the absence of street-lamps, seemed groping their way in darkness.

Two or three times Jotham paused.

"I've half a mind to go home," he mused. "What if father should scold? I don't believe he would give

me any other punishment, and I can bear the scolding. I ought to bear it, for I deserved it. I did wrong. Yes, I was mean to go stealing an old lady's apples. No wonder father was angry. I'll go home, for I'm dreadfully hungry. I have had nothing but an apple since breakfast, and now it is past supper-time. I've nowhere to go, nowhere to sleep to-night. I don't want to beg, and I've no money."

Putting his hands in his pockets, he shook the few coppers he happened to have; but there were not enough to even buy him a supper, and if there were, where would he buy it? There were no refreshment rooms on that quiet road; he must go to some private house, and delicacy forbade that; it seemed like begging.

Every moment the unhappy boy grew more undecided. Should he go home, or should he not? Finally, as the darkness deepened, and he grew yet more hungry, he stopped in earnest thought, then resolutely turned his face homeward. It seemed as though Annette was beckoning him. He could hear her voice calling, "Jotham, Jotham, come home."

He remembered how she followed him the evening previous, how she sat on the stone by the roadside and pleaded with him. Then he thought of her headache

this morning, caused, undoubtedly by her exposure and anxiety.

“And now,” he said to himself, “I have run away from her again. She cannot follow me; she does not know where I am. Perhaps she is weeping for me, for she always seems to love me. I’ll go home. Yes, I will.”

Under the strength of this resolution, he rapidly retraced the road he had come. Now that he had decided, he seemed in haste to return and know the worst. His steps were almost a run; but at length nature grew weary, and he walked with less speed. Even the thoughts of his mother’s pantry and table failed to hurry him. He was thoroughly tired; and, as he walked more slowly, he mused again, —

“For what am I going home? To get something to eat. Perhaps I cannot get it. Perhaps I cannot be allowed to stay at home; father said that if I stepped once more from the path of rectitude he should be done with me forever; and of course he will call this a crime, for didn’t I come away this morning when he told me to go to school? Haven’t I stayed away all day? Oh, yes, he will say this is as bad as stealing apples! He will not let me stay at home. He said such a boy as I ought to work; that I ought to earn my own

bread; and I said, 'Very well, I can, sir.' Now here am I, going home because I am hungry. That doesn't look like earning my bread. But what can I do? The captain wouldn't take me; and if some other captain would take me, I don't really want to go to sea. It must be very hard to live and work as the sailors do, tossing all the time on those terrible waves; especially when it is cold like to-night. No, I don't want to go to sea. I can't stay and work in the city, for father will find me out, and what shall I do?"

As he walked along, the cry of a child arrested his steps, and then he heard the harsh voice of a man, saying, "Go into the house, child! There, take that for your ugliness!"

The man and the child were in a shed near the road, and Jotham distinctly heard the rude blow upon the ear as the child went screaming into the house.

"That's an ugly father," thought Jotham. "My father is just so. All fathers are ugly. If I go home I'll be treated just so. I won't go home. I won't stand such treatment. I never'll go home. Father would be just so cross to me, and Annette couldn't stop him. He said he would never listen to her again. No, I cannot go home. I have no home now. My

father's home is not my home. He said he had done with me forever."

Once more the wanderer turned, and over the cold road he ran again. On into the country he went, neither heeding nor caring whither. His heart had grown bitter and decided. Whether he kept a straight course, or whether he turned, he knew not nor cared. Really he had wound away from the main road, and was in the midst of a rural population. Somewhere from a distant steeple, as he quietly pursued his determined way, he heard the ringing of the evening bell, and it recalled him to his situation.

"It is nine o'clock," he said to himself, "and here I am, so tired I can hardly step. My feet ache so I think they'll come through my boots. I wish I had a good bed. I must sleep somewhere."

A shadow loomed up in the distance before him, and, as he approached it, he perceived it to be a barn. It stood alone, at some way from the house to which it evidently belonged, and as the wearied boy drew near, two men left the barn with a lighted lantern. The heavy door swung together after them, and Jotham observed that they did not lock it. He drew back a little, lest he should be observed, and paused, while

the men went to the house. When all was still again, he cautiously approached the barn-door.

"If I could only get in here," he thought, half-frightened at his own temerity, "perhaps I could find a place to sleep. I wouldn't do any harm. I'd get up early, and go off before anybody comes."

Timidly he placed his hand upon the large iron latch, and, as he raised it, it clicked with a heavy sound. Frightened, he paused, but as no one came, he ventured to raise the latch once more with greater caution.

"It seems like being a house-breaker," he said to himself; "but I can't help it. I must sleep somewhere, and I won't do a bit of harm."

Opening the door just wide enough to admit his body, he crawled silently through, and closed it again. How his heart beat! He could feel it, almost hear it, bounding! With a strong effort at calmness, he stepped softly one side, and hit against a barrel. His hand involuntarily extended as a balance, and came down upon some large, fair apples. Yes, they were apples. He could feel the stems, the smooth skins, the blossomed ends, and he was so hungry! How good an apple would taste!

Almost unconsciously he raised one to his lips, and

his teeth were in it. It was sweet and delicious, but — a sudden thought struck him, a pang of remorse. The apple was not his. He had stolen it, and it was bitten!

“What can I do?” he asked himself, in anguish. “Everything I do is wrong. I must be a terribly wicked boy. Oh, dear! — But — I have it! Yes, I know what I’ll do. I’ll eat the apple, and before I go out in the morning I’ll leave a cent where the men can find it. That will be fair.”

Scarcely had he uttered this resolution, ere a light flashed through the key-hole of the door, the iron latch clicked, and men’s boots were shuffling on the frozen ground outside.

Jotham was paralyzed. His heart, which had been leaping at a “double-quick,” suddenly paused. The apple in his hand was clenched with twofold force, and the mouthful between his teeth seemed fastened as in a vice, while his terrified eyes fixed themselves upon the key-hole through which the light was streaming.

Suddenly the key-hole was darkened, something was thrust into it, then there was the turning of a lock, then the key was removed, the light flashed through again, and the motionless boy realized that he was locked in.

For several minutes after the departure of the man he remained like a statue. He could scarcely realize that he had escaped! He could hardly believe that he was alone again, uncaught! In that brief moment he had seen before his imagination himself a prisoner, handcuffed as a thief, and he had realized the horrors of a trial, and a prison at the end.

Now, as the sound of the footsteps died away, and he was once more alone, his heart gave a new rebound, his jaws relaxed, and the apple resting between his teeth felt their power. His first impulse was to run. He would escape from a position of so much danger. But how? The door was locked. There might be other doors, but, in groping after them, he might fall into trouble. Added to all, he heard a heavy bark outside. A dog was probably there to guard the premises.

"Bow-wow," with a coarse voice went the mastiff, just before the barn-door, and again Jotham thrilled. Why should the dog stand there, barking?

"He has found out I am here," said the terrified boy. "Dogs always do find out people. Oh, dear! I'm afraid the man will come back again."

But the man having just come from the barn, and

believing everything safe there, couldn't comprehend the barking of the dog.

"Here, here, sir," he called, looking back at him by the light of the lantern. "Come here! There, no noise! That's a good fellow. Save your barking till there's need of it."

Very unwillingly the animal obeyed, looking back suspiciously; but the master soothed and petted him, till, finally, he grew reconciled, and walked contentedly away. All this Jotham heard as his quickened ears listened attentively, and presently he comprehended that now he was truly left alone. The dog and his master were gone, and he whom they would have locked out was safely locked in.

The stamp of a horse, the nibbling of hay, and the low breathing of cows told the prisoner who were to be his room-mates. They were new companions, but they could neither betray nor punish him, and, with that reflection for a solace, he stealthily crept along, feeling his way by the guidance of the hay scaffolds, and peering through the barn-floor dimly discernible by his eyes now used to the darkness. Half way through the barn was a bay from which the hay had been partially taken, and into this he climbed by mounting a low railing. Thence, groping, he crawled

up a short ladder, placed against a high scaffold, and passing up this, was soon safely lodged beneath the eaves, rolled over behind the hay, and half buried under it.

He grew warm, and his bed was soft, but it seemed unnatural, and he could not sleep. All around was quiet, but within him was a tumult. The agony of affright through which he had just passed had wholly changed him. Before that, he had felt like a very independent boy running away from an unjust father; now he seemed like a criminal, trespassing upon another's man's property, guilty of stealing, and of lodging upon his premises without leave; indeed, it seemed to him that he was guilty of every offence, so mean he had become in his own eyes.

As he lay on his hay-bed he thought of Harry, wondered whether he was quietly sleeping, or whether they were all anxious about him, so that they could not sleep in his own home.

"I reckon father's angry enough by this time," he said to himself. "He'd storm if I should go home now. No, I'll not go home. Not I. I told father I could work, and I can. I'll go to work on a farm. I've seen farm-work done at grandfather's. I could do anything. But I do wish I had never gone with

George; then I should not have displeased father. No, I don't wish so, either. George is a good fellow. Father is cross."

Thus distracted by conflicting emotions, he lay till nearly midnight, revolving plans at one moment which were to be rejected the next. Finally, tired nature could endure no longer, and he sunk into a heavy sleep.

Far away from him, on that same night, there were other sleepless eyes. In his own home a mother was weeping, a father was threatening, a brother wondering, and a sister, unconscious, lay moaning and tossing on her fevered bed. But still further away, in a distant country town, an aged couple sat talking. Many years they had happily trodden the vale of life, pleased with each other and with the world around them. Much good they had done in their little sphere, and now they wished to add one more happiness to the circle they loved.

"I'm so glad you've thought of it," said Grandmother Wilson. "You are always thinking something good, though you are so afraid somebody will know it."

"Poh!" rejoined grandfather, "this is nothing very good. It is just for my own gratification."

"But it is good," replied grandmother, "and it will make us all happy. I am sure I shall be happy in going. Jotham and Annette will be delighted to see us, and I am sure Josiah will give us a cordial welcome to his Thanksgiving table, especially if we provide our own dinner."

"Well, I've been thinking," replied grandfather, "that 'twould be too lonesome to stay here all day, and only you and I trying to eat a turkey with Jones and Smith. They can stay and eat with Sally Ann, while you and I go to our son's. Maybe we shan't take many more journeys together till we take that last long one."

A tear trickled on grandmother's fair cheek, and grandfather's ruddy face gleamed in the rays of the fire.

"We've had many happy years together," the old gentleman said.

And grandmother added, "They're about over now! Yes, we'll go to Josiah's to Thanksgiving. It will be a treat for the children. I can fancy Jotham stepping proudly toward us with his defiant manner, Annette with her loving caress, and Harry placidly saying, 'I am glad to see you, grandmother.' Yes,

we'll go to Thanksgiving. Three weeks from to-morrow, isn't it?"

"Yes," replied grandfather, "and you'd better write to-morrow to tell them about it. Tell them that on the Tuesday previous we will send a box full of good things, so they need not be at any trouble on our account. That is best, isn't it?"

"Certainly, father. You always know what is best. We'll put in a turkey and chickens, a cheese and some butter, pies, cakes, and a quantity of those little knick-knacks I make which they love. We'll have a happy visit, I'm sure. I'm glad Jotham is doing so well, now. I think he will earn the rewards I promised him. You remember, don't you? I promised him a Bible at the end of the year, if he would try to pray every morning and evening. I tried to explain to him that the best safeguard of our life is prayer. Besides that, I promised him a five-dollar gold piece if he would keep at the head a year; and he said he could do that easily enough. The year will end next summer, and, if he keeps on as he has begun, he'll be sure to win both prizes."

"I hope he will," replied grandfather. "He is capable of becoming a smart man. He has ability and

energy. If he can only be kept from bad companions he will do well enough."

"That is not quite all he needs," rejoined grandmother. "He needs most of all, a high aim, and a noble purpose. Give him that, and he will outstride temptation. That was why I proposed to him to strive to keep at the head of the class. While he is aiming for that he will become interested in his studies; having gained the head, he will be proud of his position and will try to keep it. Then I felt the necessity of impressing him with the importance of a religious life. I wanted to lift him up to higher motives, and I know that nothing so elevates the mind as earnest prayer."

"Well," replied grandfather, "I hope your efforts will be successful. I wish I could see the scamp this minute. When he ran away with my colts last summer, I thought I should never have any more patience with him; but I declare, he was so sorry for that, I could not help forgiving him."

Thus the old people communed, sitting together in the glow of the fire-light, grandmother busily knitting, and her portly, ruddy consort toying with the corner of the last weekly paper, in which he had just finished reading the state of the markets, and the general

summary of news. At length grandmother glanced at the tall clock standing in the corner.

"See there, father! It is eleven o'clock! When did ever you and I sit up so late? It seems like forty years ago, when the hours we sat together were but as moments."

"Ah, ha!" laughed grandfather, "when you thought it was not midnight, and that the redness in the east was some fire broken out. You couldn't believe the sun was about to rise."

Grandmother smiled. "So you haven't forgotten that, have you? Well, you were as much surprised as I. You didn't think it was morning."

"No, I confess I didn't. It was a short night, that's a fact. You know that was the first time you fairly promised me to be mine always. You haven't been sorry, have you?"

"Never, father, never. Some trials we've had together, but they have only endeared us to each other. Three of our little ones lie under the sod. Only Josiah is left to us, but he is a good son, and has three as fine children as are to be found."

"So they are," added grandmother. "Annette is a gem, Harry is good, and Jotham will be extra if he only tries."

The old lady rolled up her knitting, put the ends of her needles carefully through the ball, and, rising, dropped the work into a basket on the table, while grandfather covered the fire with ashes, inspected the fastenings of the doors and windows, and soon the household was in quiet sleep, while the Jotham of their love, hidden under the eaves of a stranger's barn, sunk into repose from anxiety and exhaustion.

The next day it became known through the neighborhood that Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were going to the city to spend Thanksgiving with their son.

"It's a great undertaking for them at their time of life," Mrs. Furbur said; but Mrs. Mason said, "that the very thought of the visit seemed to make them ten years younger."

Annette's friend Julia came as soon as she heard of the intended expedition, and her smiling face beamed with beauty as she entered.

"O Grandmother Wilson, I heard you were going to see Annette at Thanksgiving!"

"Yes, darling, I expect to."

Grandmother's love called all young people darlings.

"Well, grandmother, I am glad you are going. I wish I could go too. I do so like Annette. There's no girl here I like so well."

"She is worthy of your love, Julia," answered grandmother, proudly. "If I do say it that shouldn't say it, there isn't a better girl in the country, always excepting you, Julia."

"Oh, don't except me, grandmother, I can't compare with her. But give her my love, won't you? And tell Jotham I haven't forgotten when he fell into the pond."

Soon after Julia left, wild Jack Furbur came in.

"Mrs. Wilson," said he, striding across the room, and pausing before the fire, "they say you are going to spend the Thanksgiving with Jotham."

"I expect to, Jack."

"That'll be jolly, Mrs. Wilson. Jotham's a grand fellow if he did run away with the colts. He's got a big heart, and he just opens wide to a fellow."

"Ah, Jack, too wide, sometimes, I fear. However, we'll hope for the best."

"And the best will be sure to come, grandmother. You see father talks to me sometimes, — thinks I'm going to be wrecked and ruined because I like a little fun. But how's a fellow to keep always a long face on? I can't, and I tell father so. But I must tell you what I came over for. The fact is, I want a pair of skates, and I earned the mouey long ago; but there

isn't a single pair in town that I like. Now, I want you to ask Jotham to buy me a real tip-top pair, the best he can find in the city. Tell him to try them on. If they fit him they'll fit me. Our boots are the same size. Tell him I'm going to beat every fellow in these parts, skating, this winter, and if he'll come up I'll try a race with him. Here's the money."

Grandmother promised to fulfil the message, and then Jack bounded away. Soon came little Johnny Mason, quietly gliding in.

"Grandma Wilson, be you going to see Harry?"

"Yes, darling, I am going."

"I do want to send Harry something, grandma; but I don't know what to send. Will you carry him a bag of chestnuts if I will bring them to you?"

"That I will, Johnny, and right glad he'll be of them too."

Johnny went out again, and grandmother murmured, "Bless their hearts, all of them! They are all good, and I like to make them happy."

CHAPTER II.

THE GLOOMY DAY.



MORNING dawned slowly into Jotham's narrow bedchamber. The warmth of the hay so snugly packed about him had deepened his slumbers, and at the early dawn, at the very time he had intended to effect his escape, he was still soundly sleeping. The cattle were astir in the stalls below, the horse was whinnying for his morning meal, the chickens came peeping out, and chanticleer gave his early call; but the tired outcast did not awaken.

The morning was cheerless and cold. A gray November mist overspread all things, and not one ray of sunlight peeped through the crevices. It was quite late, even past the breakfast-hour in farm-houses, when Jotham first became conscious. There was a pain in his limbs, an unwonted weariness, and yawning; he turned as though wondering what could be the cause of these unusual sensations. But as he moved,

the sharp spears of hay touched his cheeks, and in a moment he was aroused to his condition. He recalled the events of the day previous, and realized his present situation. Slightly raising his head to ascertain whether it was day, he hit the beam, which came close down to his bed, so far back had he pushed himself in his endeavors to be wholly secreted.

A slight sigh escaped him. He found that, though he had slept, he was not much refreshed. His first thought was the fear of being discovered. He had concluded, before sleeping, that there probably were small doors to the barn, which were fastened inside, and he had resolved to rise early, before any one would be stirring, and effect his escape. But now, as he strained his eyes to ascertain the hour, he saw that it was fairly daylight, and directly he heard voices below. He could hear the hay rattle as it was pulled from the scaffold to the floor, and, more than that, he could see it move from the front edge of the very division where he lay. Terrified, he shrank back.

“What if they should see me?” he mused.

But presently he heard loud voices. A boy had come into the barn, and a man called to him in an angry tone, —

"Hallo, here, you young rascal! I told you not to touch one of those apples last night."

"I didn't touch one," answered the boy.

"Didn't touch one! What does this mean, then? Here's a core I found this morning over in the hay there! You ate the apple and then threw the core away."

"I didn't touch an apple, sir."

"Now you just look here, youngster. I don't care half as much about the apple as you think, but if you are going to lie in that way, you'd better look out! Come here."

Breathlessly Jotham listened, and he heard their steps as they walked toward the door. Then they stopped, and the man exclaimed, —

"There, look in that barrel! Last night I placed the apples in it as evenly as I could lay them. Now you can see! Just in the middle of the barrel the handsomest apple of the lot is gone, and here is the core tossed off into the hay. You thought it wouldn't be seen there."

"I don't know anything about it, sir," replied the boy, firmly.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed the man, apparently





THE STOLEN APPLE. — Page 31.

too much surprised to utter more, and then he paused.

"I didn't touch the apple, sir," repeated the boy, this time more tremulously, and the man noticed the tremor.

"You'd better tremble, I should think! Standing there with a lie in your mouth! I didn't want the apple eaten, but that's nothing to having a liar on my farm."

Just then another man came, and the case was presented to him.

"You know, Wiley," said the first man, in conclusion, "we fixed those apples just before dark, and they are to go to Deacon Holman's this day. They are the best I have, and I wanted them to look a little extra, so I told Joseph not to touch them. If he wants apples, there are plenty of others he can have. I don't grudge him an apple, but I can't stand this lying, nor I won't."

"Joseph," said the second man, mildly, "you'd better acknowledge. I s'pose the apple looked so good you couldn't resist. I wouldn't tell a falsehood."

"But I didn't touch it, sir," remonstrated the boy. "I wasn't out here last night. You know I was sawing wood in the shed."

"Yes," said the first man, "you was sawing wood, but you managed to get out here and eat that. Don't deny it again. Own it, and perhaps I'll forgive you, and keep you; but deny it, and you leave my service. I'll not hire a liar."

"Joseph," said the second man, "confess it now, and I'll plead with your master to forgive you. I'll be your friend. As the Lord hath forgiven me my sins, I'll plead with him to forgive you. You know, Joseph, that I think you are a Christian."

"Yes, Mr. Wiley, I hope I am. You know I would not touch an apple after Mr. Lothrop told me not to, and you know I wouldn't tell a lie."

"I didn't think you would, Joseph; but somebody did eat the apple, that is certain. Here is the core, and there is the place where the apple was taken out."

"And of course he ate it," responded Mr. Lothrop, sternly. "There was not another living soul about here. And I remember now; he didn't come in to supper so soon as we did."

"That was because I wanted to finish that big stick of wood," answered the boy.

"Stuff and nonsense!" returned Mr. Lothrop. "I don't believe a word you say. I never did have any confidence in these pretended Christians. They are

hypocrites, every one of them. Begging your pardon, friend Wiley, I don't mean you."

"I forgive you," replied Mr. Wiley, "but I do not agree with you. I believe there are sincere Christians who would sooner forfeit their lives than do a wrong act, and I thought this boy was one of them. I have known him from the cradle, and this is the first time I ever saw anything that looked suspicious in his actions. Joseph, my boy, I wish you would confess it. I'll get Mr. Lothrop to forgive you."

"Yes, boy," returned Mr. Lothrop; "just own it and I'll say no more. It's only a little thing, and if you'll tell the truth, I'll keep you, for I like you."

"I do tell the truth, sir," returned the boy, boldly. "I did not touch the apple, and I do not know anything about it."

"Well, well," returned Mr. Lothrop, "this beats me! Such audacity! I believe I owe you six dollars, boy. Here, take it; I happen to have it in my pocket. Take it, and go! I want no liars on my premises."

The boy broke into sobs.

"Don't send me away, Mr. Lothrop. It is just winter and I can't find another place. My poor mother has no one to earn for her but me."

"Well, then, if you regard your mother, speak the

truth, and you can still work for her. I promise you I'll keep you if you'll tell the truth."

"I do tell the truth, sir. I should tell a lie if I should say I ate the apple."

"Bare-faced impudence!" returned Mr. Lothrop, scornfully. "The facts are here before our eyes, and yet you deny it. Go, as soon as possible."

Audible sobs still came from the boy.

"Nobody will hire me, sir, if you call me a liar and send me away. People will believe you."

"I can't help it," returned Mr. Lothrop. "I have my own eyes against your word."

Mr. Wiley once more expostulated, but all in vain. Mr. Lothrop declared he would not have a liar near him, and presently poor Joseph went out. As Jotham, up in his narrow bed, heard the boy go away, he was in a tumult of excited feelings. His honest, open-hearted impulses prompted him to rush down, confess the truth, and bring Joseph back to the confidence of his master; but a cowardly fear restrained him. He knew by the sound of Mr. Lothrop's voice that he must be a stern man, and he dreaded the consequences to himself.

"Oh, dear!" he inwardly groaned. "Annette always said crooked paths were hard, and I believe they are,

for every step I take in them leads into trouble. I knew I had no right to touch that apple, but I thought I could leave a cent in its place, so it wouldn't be stealing. Oh, dear! What shall I do? I've a good mind to jump right down there, and tell Mr. Lothrop all about it; but then, he'll give me a thrashing, likely as not, and tell me to go home. Oh, dear! What shall I do? I wish I had stayed at home. Father would have got good-natured some time, and I don't wonder he was cross. I didn't do right. Oh, dear! I'm the meanest boy that ever lived, and I used to think I was so smart! I wish I had never gone with George Thompson. If I had only minded Annette, I would have been all right. Dear Annette! I wonder where she is? I'm the meanest fellow in the world!"

Thus thinking, instead of acting, Jotham suffered the moments to pass away. First thinking he would go to Mr. Lothrop and confess, then, dreading the consequences and shrinking back, he was equal to no confession. The moments passed away, and soon the opportunity was gone, for Mr. Lothrop said, "Wiley, you harness the horse, and I'll take this barrel of apples over to Deacon Holman, now. I'll just run into the house and get another apple to replace this one.

I've apples enough, and I didn't so much mind the loss of one; but I do hate liars, and I won't keep one."

"I'm dreadful sorry this has happened," replied Wiley. "I never knew that boy do a mean thing. I don't understand it, and there's his mother depending on his work; I don't know what she'll do."

"She'd better take some of his pretended religion out of him," sneered Mr. Lothrop, as he went out of the barn. "It's sheer hypocrisy."

In a moment Mr. Lothrop was gone, and Mr. Wiley had led the horse into the open barn.

"Now's my time," thought Jotham. "Wiley is a good man. I'll go right down and tell him, for I'm so sorry for poor Joseph."

Drawing his wearied limbs from their cramped bed, he began to rub them, for they felt numb, and as he rubbed he summoned anew his resolution to face Mr. Wiley and tell the whole truth.

"Dear me!" he murmured, inwardly, "how numb my legs are!"

Then he gave another pull, and the hay rustled about him.

"What in creation's that?" asked Mr. Lothrop, coming into the barn with the apple, and looking up as the hay rustled.

Mr. Wiley smiled. "It's the hens, probably. Perhaps one is making a nest up there. You're excited, Mr. Lothrop."

"It's enough to make one excited," he answered, gruffly. "I wanted that boy more than a little. He's the best boy I ever had, and to think he should lie so, — right in my face. But I must be off. You go up on the scaffold by and by, Wiley, and see if there's a nest. Wait till you think the hen is gone, because she won't do so well if you disturb her."

Jotham shrank back at the sound of Mr. Lothrop's voice. He could not acquire courage to meet him.

"He doesn't seem a bad man," he said to himself; "but he's just like my father. He's good to those who do right; but if a fellow does wrong, he's no mercy. I dare not go down. He'd kill me. But when he's gone, I'll go down and tell Wiley."

But in this he was disappointed. He thought Mr. Lothrop would drive away and leave Wiley at the barn, but, after Mr. Lothrop was in the wagon, he called, —

"Wiley, the chores are all done here, aren't they?"

"Yes, sir, for the present."

"Well, you'd better go and finish sawing that wood, now Joseph's gone."

“Very well, sir,” and then Jotham heard the great doors shut, heard the wagon go away, and Mr. Wiley walking toward the house. A death-like silence came into the barn. The cattle had been turned into the yard, the horse no longer stamped, and a few hens were the only sign of life.

Jotham reflected, “What shall I do? Wiley will be back by and by, looking up here after a hen’s nest. I’d better be off.”

Then his conscience whispered, “Don’t go till you have cleared Joseph. Find Wiley, and tell him. Do one right thing.”

Buoyed by this idea, he slid from the scaffold down to the hay, then leaped the low railing and stood upon the barn-floor. A thought of the savage dog crossed his mind, and he resolved to reconnoitre. Perhaps the mastiff might be watching outside. Softly stepping he looked through the small windows of the barn, passing from side to side till he had taken the full bearings of the situation. No dog was in sight. The large doors of the barn opened directly upon the road, the house was at a little distance on one side, and, as no person appeared in view, the boy hastily dropped a cent on a stool near, opened the door, and, sliding through, leaped into the street. He was trembling

with affright, like a prisoner escaped from his dungeon.

In his first impulse, he ran, as though longing to leave a place of so much danger; but then he thought of Joseph, and turned to go toward the house. He stepped quickly though timidly, but just as he came to the gate, two men came driving down the road, and turned into the yard. Wiley heard them and came to meet them. Jotham paused, and, as he looked about him, he saw through the window a little girl looking earnestly at him. Her face was pleasant, and the guilty boy might not have turned from her, but beside her he saw the huge mastiff also looking at him, and he turned quickly away.

"I can't tell Wiley," he murmured, by way of excuse for his cowardice. "Those men are talking with him. I'll be off somewhere, no matter where."

The little girl watched him, wondering who he could be, but he was soon out of sight and she thought of him no more. He went away with his guilt and his wretchedness hanging about him. He tried to appease his conscience for eating the apple by thinking how hungry he was, and that he had left a cent in its place; but, in spite of his reasonings, straightforward conscientiousness told him he had done another very mean

thing. He felt meanly enough before. He was ashamed that he had run away from home just because his father was cross to him when he knew he deserved censure; but now this new guilt seemed to be greater than the others. He was haunted by the voice of Joseph, pleading, "I do tell the truth, sir;" and he said to himself, "That was a noble fellow, and I have driven him from his good place to work; I have cast a stain upon his character. I've a mind to find him, and tell him all about it; but no, he's so good, he would look at me with scorn. I couldn't face him. What will become of me? I'm sure I cannot tell."

When one has been guilty of a crime, it is surprising how the mind will vacillate under reflection. As Jotham slowly walked over the frozen road that dreary autumnal day, a thousand varying emotions filled his mind. He was weary, hungry, unrefreshed by his night's rest, and he knew not where to go; too proud to beg, and too poor to buy. In his own orderly home, he had every morning bathed his face, combed his hair, put on a clean collar, and made his appearance neat and becoming. This morning he went just as he pulled himself from the hay, except that once he took off his cap in the street and smoothed his hair a little with his pocket-comb. His

clothes were full of hay-dust, and his eyes seemed weary and dull.

Thoughts of home came to him, but they were soon discarded. He believed his father's house could be a home to him no longer.

"No," he said to himself, emphatically, "I cannot go there now. If I should tell my father the truth, he would shut the door in my face, and I cannot tell a lie. No, Joseph would not tell a lie, even to save his place, and I won't tell a lie. No, I cannot go home now. I have no home. My father said he would discard me, forever, if I committed another misdemeanor. He said I must work, and I will. I've a mind to go back and try another captain. I could go to sea. Maybe some other captain would take me. I don't believe I'm so very bad, after all. Father never had patience with me. I didn't mean any harm."

On he wandered, burdened under every variety of imagination, growing more tired and more hungry. Once he came to a village, and, going into a grocery store, purchased a few crackers with his few remaining pennies; but these were soon gone, and then he drifted hopelessly on.

Hunger is a hard master. It will bring down the

most obstinate. When once it has set up its claim, it demands with an imperious audacity. Jotham tried by every means to forget that faint gnawing which sickened him; but it would not be forgotten. Back again the terrible feeling would come, each time with renewed strength. It was nearly thirty-six hours since he had eaten a full meal. Two apples and a few dry crackers were all that had sustained him during a continuous walk of nearly two days, for it was now almost dark of the second day since he left his home. Many miles lay between him and the barn where he had slept. He wanted it so, for though no person had seen him there, he felt like a criminal on the point of detection. Now he was so far away that he seemed more secure, and as another night was drawing on, he began to wonder where he should sleep again.

At length he came to the foot of a hill, which he began to ascend. The place was exceedingly lonely, and the road rough. Not a house was visible. Half-way up the hill he paused, and a few tears dropped upon his cheeks. He was so exhausted that he could scarcely walk, and he sat down upon a stone beside the road, thinking he would crawl into the woods near by, and there sleep till he should sleep the last

repose of death. He saw that he must die or beg some food, and he thought it would be better to die.

But the invisible, loving God, who has made immortal souls upon this earth, does not leave them to perish. Their transgressions may bring sorrow upon themselves, but he who watches does not leave them. He loves the erring as well as the good, and seeks the wandering, that they may be brought back to the light of life. Jotham needed chastisements that he might learn to walk in a straight path; but God would not leave him to die there alone.

Just as he was thinking these despairing thoughts, seeing nothing but darkness before him, he heard a sound at the foot of the hill, —

“Whoa! Whoa!”

The voice betokened distress, and, involuntarily, he glanced in that direction. There were two horses there, and an old man was trying to hold them. He had a large farm-wagon, on which were several bags of grain, some boxes, and a pile of dried cod-fish. By some accident, some of these bags and boxes had slipped off, and the old man was trying to hold the horses while he could replace them. At any former period in his life Jotham would have rushed to help in such an emergency; but now he sat stupidly look-

ing. He felt too thoroughly debased to be of assistance to any one. Such is the power of wrong-doing over the human mind.

The old man tugged and worked till he grew exasperated. Every time he left the horses to pick up a bag, they would start. The hill was not very steep at the foot, the load was light, and the horses were going toward home. They had no idea of waiting, for they, too, had empty stomachs, and were in haste for their hay and oats.

"Confound you!" screamed the old man, as they started the fourth time before he had picked up a single bag. "I'll give it to you! I'll break your necks for you!"

In the fury of his passion, he ran in front of the horses and begun to back them, for they had drawn the wagon quite a distance from the spot where the bags lay.

"Back there, I tell ye! Back!" he shouted, striking them across their noses, and "back" they went, faster than he could hold them. They came to the bags, and then he screamed, again, "Whoa!"—but not they. They had begun to back, and they were determined to do it. The old man clutched at their bridles and pulled with all his force, but they thought of their

smarting noses, and still receded. Presently the wagon behind them veered, and they turned also. Around went the wheels, after them backed the horses, tossing their heads in the air and jerking the old man from his feet. A few more turns, and the wheels ran off at the side of a deep ditch, the wagon capsized, the horses stopped by the entanglement of the harnesses, and the old man stood helplessly before them.

Jotham had watched these proceedings with increasing interest. His benumbed faculties seemed to rouse, and he forgot himself, as his eyes were riveted on the scene of excitement. But he did not stir until he saw the lumbering wagon in the ditch. Then his hunger and his misery were forgotten and his natural impulses returned. Springing from his seat, he ran down the hill as though wings helped him, and, in a moment, stood by the old man's side.

"Where d'ye come from?" asked the old man.

"Come down the hill, sir."

"Was that you settin' on the stone there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wall, why on airth didn't you come sooner? What d'ye sit there for, when a feller was in distress?"

Jotham did not reply. The old man's manner seemed unkind, and the boy hardly knew what to say. However, they soon went to work, and the old man found the new-comer an excellent assistant. His ready invention soon extricated the horses, and, as he worked with a "right good-will," his good sense soon brought order out of confusion.

CHAPTER III.

FINDING A HOME.



It was not an easy task to pick up that overturned wagon, and rearrange the scattered load. Darkness was coming on apace, and Jotham entirely forgot his own situation while his hands wrought busily. He had a strong natural love for horses, and the admirable manner in which these had foiled their master, quite won his admiration for them, although he had sympathized with their owner in his distress. As the two spirited animals were cut loose from their fastenings, and, bounding forward, shook themselves as though rejoicing in the disaster they had caused, Jotham looked at them with admiration. He saw that they were high-mettled, fat, and glossy, and even now little disposed to wait patiently till the boxes and bags were restored to their places.

"Let me hold them," said Jotham, seeing they were

determined not to stand, and their owner readily assented.

Jotham grasped the bridle with one hand, and with the other stroked their manes and faces, looking in their spirited eyes, and they seemed to yield to him a passive obedience. He tamed them, very much as he had once captivated his grandfather's colts in the pasture; and while he was doing this the old man righted his team.

"It's lucky I have some strings," he remarked, as he examined the harnesses. "I always carry strings for fear of accidents. But, I do declare, this ere's a pretty job. These ere harnesses will have to be sent off to be fixed. I'll tie 'em up now, but they'll have to be fixed. That'll be a pretty job of cost. 'Twill take some dollars, I dunno how many, to fix 'em. I'd like to give them horses an almighty walloping.

A fierce, disagreeable expression crossed the man's face, and Jotham half shrank away, but the expression passed away directly, and soon the team was ready to recommence the ascent of the hill. Then the old man looked at his new assistant, and for the first time seemed to wonder who he might be.

"What's your name, youngster?" he asked, as he was about to start the horses

"Jotham Wilson, sir."

"Aha! I don't know that name. You don't belong in this town, I take it?"

"No, sir," answered Jotham, a thought of his situation flashing into his mind.

"Where d'ye come from?"

"From the city," replied the boy, hesitatingly, not quite liking to reveal the home which he had so ignominiously left.

"From the city!" replied the man, scanning him closely in the deepening twilight. "What kind of a boy are you? What are you off out here for?"

These were questions not very agreeable to Jotham. As to the first, he hardly knew what to say, for he was not quite certain what kind of a boy he was. Once he thought himself "a splendid fellow;" but now he felt like a guilty culprit. His own conduct seemed to himself very mean, and besides hunger was beginning to speak again now that the excitement was passing away.

The second question was equally difficult, for he was not willing to tell that he stole apples from an old lady, was thrust into the lock-up, and had run away because his father censured him for such misconduct. But

while he hesitated, he felt those cold gray eyes resting upon him, and presently the old man spoke again.

"I say, boy, what are you here for?"

"Because I don't know where to be."

"Why, haven't you any home?"

"No, sir."

Now, Jotham feared a lie, and he excused himself for this prevarication by thinking that truly he had no home, for his father had threatened to discard him forever, and that had made him a wanderer. But the old man had more questions yet. Jotham's prompt assistance and ready intelligence had pleased him, and now his curiosity was aroused.

"Come," he said, "let's jump into the wagon. The horses may as well draw us, they feel so nicely."

"Now," said the man, as they started up the hill, "tell me all about yourself. Haven't you got any father and mother?"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, with some hesitation.

"Well, why don't you stay at home?"

A sudden idea flashed into Jotham's mind by which he thought he might screen himself, throw the blame upon his father, and prevent further questions, and yet not tell a falsehood. Accordingly, he answered, —

"My father says I must work."

"Aha! That's it, is it? Can't afford to keep you any longer? Well, you do look big enough to work, and 'twon't hurt you to earn your own living. But why don't he put you into a store? That's the way city boys generally do."

"I don't want to go," answered the boy, still trying to keep within the bounds of truth.

"Don't you? Wall, that's strange! What do you want to do? Work on a farm?"

"Yes, sir; I would do that."

"Do you know anything about it?"

"I never worked much on one, but I've been to my grandfather's and seen them work there."

"Where does your grandfather live?"

"At Cherryfield."

"Cherryfield — Cherryfield — I don't rightly know where that is. — In this State?"

"Yes, sir; way up north of Boston."

"Ay, ay, yes. Wall, I don't know much about the towns there. — Where are you going to-night?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Don't you? Wall, that's a pretty hard case. 'Twan't right for your father to send you out so to find a place. He ought to have found one for you. Got any money?"

"No, sir."

"Wall, wall, you must have a queer kind of a father. Guess I must take you in to-night. You've done me a good service, and it's no more'n fair I should keep you."

Jotham's heart leaped with joy. He thought not nor cared what kind of a man this new acquaintance might be. It was sufficient for him to know that he was to be taken to some kind of a home where he would be likely to have something to eat. He turned toward the old man and thanked him.

"Aha! So you're glad to go with me? Wall, I don't wonder. I should think you'd want a place to sleep. 'Twas a risky way you took to find work, for 't isn't every one wants to take in a boy that comes round so. There might be something wrong, you know."

By this time they had reached the top of the hill, and the impatient horses were allowed to go at the height of their speed. One or two small farm-houses were passed, and then they turned into a broad, unfenced yard. Jotham could see very little, for it was now quite dark, but he observed that the windows were without blinds, and that the only light visible was at the extreme rear of the house, which seemed to be large, but in no way elegant.

As they drove opposite the kitchen windows, a brown dog leaped into the wagon, giving the master a cordial welcome, then turning to inspect the new visitor.

"Get down! get down!" said the master, and at that moment the outer kitchen door opened, and a large woman came in sight.

"Why didn't you come sooner?" she demanded, in a heavy, masculine voice.

Jotham looked to see if there was a man behind her, for he could hardly believe such a voice could be the utterance of a woman. He saw no one, however, and was compelled to believe it was she who spoke. The man answered drily, —

"Got tipped over."

"Got tipped over!" repeated the woman, in a tone of horror. "And did you come out all safe?"

"Yes, pretty safe. It'll cost me something to get the harnesses mended, though."

"Cost! will it?" sneered the woman, finding that was all the damage. "Why didn't you keep right side up? You're always doing something to take money."

The man made no reply, and the woman returned to the kitchen, soon appearing again with a lighted lantern, which she placed upon the broad stone

step of the door. She gave a searching glance at Jotham, as the rays from the lantern revealed him, but, without speaking, re-entered the house, and the rattle of dishes soon told that she was preparing supper. Never was there a more welcome sound to Jotham. His fainting system revived at the cheering ring of the cups and plates, and, seizing the lantern, he followed the man and horses to the barn.

“Fly round,” said the man, as they drew off the harnesses. “You lead one horse, and I will lead the other.”

Jotham hastened, for the ring of the dishes was still in his ears, and the gnawing within him was almost insupportable. He unbuckled the straps, threw the blanket over the horse, and led him to the stall with the utmost celerity.

“Smart boy!” muttered the man. “Knows what he’s about, I reckon. I wonder now if ’twouldn’t be a good idee! It’s mighty unhandy to do all the work alone. I’ve tried it many a winter, and I’ve got about tired on’t. ’Twould be a good idee to hire him.”

Then turning to Jotham, he added, “Toss up a little of this hay to the horses, and I’ll give the cattle a little of this ere fodderin’. The old woman fed ’em some, I reckon, when she tied ’em up.”

"The old woman!" thought Jotham. "What does he mean? Does that woman come out and tie up the cattle? I wonder whether she's his wife."

But he had not long to wonder, for in a moment the man called, "Come, let's go in and have some grub."

At any other time Jotham would have smiled, but now he was so hungry that language mattered little to him. Two days of almost entire fasting had nearly subdued him. He followed the man into the broad kitchen, where the table was spread for the supper, but not, as he was anticipating, in the middle of the room. It was not a nice oval table covered with a white cloth, such as he had always sat by in his mother's home, but it stood by the side of the room, as though the mistress thought it too much trouble to take it to the centre of the floor, and its covering was a painted oil-cloth.

One little flush of disappointment crossed the mind of the hungry boy, but he quickly recovered, for he saw a plate of bread on this little side-table, and the flavor of tea was in the room. There was a large kitchen stove, in which the wood was brightly burning, and by this stove stood a woman busily stirring some mixture. She turned as they came in, and cast an in-

quiring glance upon Jotham. The man came forward.

"I've picked up this chap," he said, "and I want you to give him some supper."

"Who is he?" asked the woman, bending her eyes full upon him. Cold gray eyes they were, and Jotham did not like them; but what could he do? He could not escape their scrutiny. Turning to the man, who had now taken off his hat, he saw by the light of the kitchen candle that he was quite bald, with a receding forehead, a long, pointed nose, thin, gray beard, and a sallow complexion. His eyes, too, were gray, cold, and hard, though a little less resolute in their expression than were the eyes of the woman, whose broad face, and large, solid body spoke of indomitable will and persevering industry. The boy glanced furtively from one to the other, while they, in their turn, scanned him. Not at all like them was he. His full, beaming eye, his bright chestnut locks, his broad white forehead, and his intelligent expression marked him as no ordinary boy, and both the farmer and his wife marvelled that such a boy should be there, penniless and homeless. Little did they think that beneath that handsome face there was a marred manhood. Little did they think that bad companions had seduced that

noble-looking youth, till he felt meaner than the dog walking wistfully beside the table.

Jotham did not speak when the woman asked, "Who is he?" nor did the man reply immediately. Drawing off his striped mittens and putting them on a little stand in one corner of the room, he placed his overcoat upon them, then laid his hat on the top of that. Then he turned to Jotham.

"What did you say your name was?"

"Jotham Wilson, sir."

"Oh, yes, yes, I remember. You see, Betsey," he continued, turning to his wife, "I found the fellow at the foot of the hill. He haint had any supper, and he's nowhere to go, and, as he helped me out of that confounded scrape, I thought I'd oughter bring him home."

"It's just like you, Enoch Higglesey," returned the woman. "Just as though I hadn't enough to do without waiting upon other people."

"Oh, you needn't wait upon him, Betsey. Just git a plate and let him sit right down here and share our grub. If it's good enough for us, it's good enough for him."

"Git a plate yourself," returned the woman, as she

went for a dish, into which she poured the mixture she had been stirring.

Quietly the man went to the cup-board, from which he soon brought a plate, a knife and fork, and a cup and saucer.

"There, Betsey," he said; "make a place here."

The woman obeyed, and then went herself for a chair. Her first irritation seemed to have subsided, and she poured a cup of tea for the young guest quite graciously, then turned to her husband.

"Didn't you know any better than to tip over, Enoch Higglesey?"

"No, Betsey, it's a fact, I didn't. The horses just got the upper hand of me, and the whole thing went over smash. If't hadn't been for this boy I wouldn't got out till this time."

"And so you've got to pay for mendin' the harnesses?" she queried.

"Yes, that's just the worst on't."

"I should think so, Enoch Higglesey. It's just pay out, pay out, all the time, this fall."

"Wall, I know it, Betsey, but I can't help it. Here, give the boy some of this puddin'."

The woman dipped out some of the mixture, and handed it to Jotham. It was a "hasty-pudding," made

of corn-meal and water. It was hot, and as she poured molasses over it, Jotham took it. At home, he would have disdained such a supper; but now he was so hungry that anything seemed good. The hot tea was delicious, although it was not strong and was sweetened with coarse brown sugar. Not the lemonade or beer with which George Thompson used to regale him in their palmy days was ever sweeter to his taste.

When the supper was finished, Mr. Higglesey arose and relighted the lantern, saying, "Come, boy."

Jotham would fain have lingered longer at the table, for it seemed that he was but half satisfied; but his judgment told him that he had eaten as much as propriety would allow, and, rising, he followed Mr. Higglesey to the barn. If he had already earned his supper by his labors at the foot of the hill, he bade fair to pay for it a second time at the barn. For half an hour he worked incessantly, running hither and thither, mixing meal with water for the fattening oxen, feeding the cosset sheep, combing and brushing the horses, carrying and emptying the meal which had just been brought home, and putting everything in order for the night.

Mr. Higglesey inwardly congratulated himself that he had been so fortunate as to bring home the boy.

"I'll git done twice as soon as common," he mused.

"I declare, it's better that his young legs should run than my old ones, that have been going nigh on to sixty years. I'll jest tell Betsey so."

When all was done, they locked the barn and went into the house. Jotham thought of the night previous when he was locked inside with no bed but the hay. Surely this night was better, for, though the people were gruff and uncongenial, their house afforded him shelter, their large fire warmed his chilled limbs, their supper nourished him, and their bed would refresh him. Therefore he was grateful, and went back into the kitchen with a contented heart.

The table was clear of dishes now, and the large woman sat by the stove knitting. A tallow candle stood on a small stand near, and a weekly newspaper lay by it. Mr. Higglesey hung his hat upon a peg in the back part of the room, and bade Jotham do the same.

"Now, boy," said he, "sit down by the stove there and git warm. I'm going to take a smoke."

Back of the stove there was a door opening into a brick oven formerly used for family baking, but now supplanted by the more convenient stove. Mr. Higglesey opened this door, and, drawing his chair near to it, sat down. Two or three clay pipes lay in the oven's

mouth, and a small box of tobacco. Jotham watched as Mr. Higglesey cut the tobacco into bits, with which he filled the pipe.

"Jest bring me a coal," said the smoker to Jotham. "There's the tongs in that box."

Jotham stared a little at this strange request, but immediately obeyed, and the old man, taking the tongs in his right hand and the pipe in his left, placed the stem of the pipe in his mouth and rested the red coal on the top of the tobacco in the bowl. When the tobacco was fairly lighted, he called Jotham to take away the tongs, turned his face toward the oven that the smoke might escape up the flue, and then puffed as though in the midst of the most serene enjoyments. Jotham sat thinking. The warmth of the fire made him sleepy, and a sense of his actual weariness oppressed him. He had passed through so many changes during the last two days that he could scarcely realize his own feelings.

"You see," said Mr. Higglesey, taking the pipe from his mouth and chucking down the half-smoked tobacco with the end of his forefinger, "I have to sit here so the smoke may go up the chimney, for my wife's so delicate she can't bear the smell of tobacco."

Jotham felt a smile rising at the idea of the delicacy

of that robust woman; but he quickly suppressed it and she immediately replied, —

“ Well, there’s no use in mincing the matter. I do hate tobacco-smoke, and that’s the long and the short of it. If I had my way there’d never be a leaf of the tobacco raised.”

“ It’s a good thing,” replied the man, “ that you can’t always have your way. ’Twould be a queer world if you could.”

“ I’d straighten some things, I know,” she replied, with an energetic snap of her needles.

“ I reckon you would,” replied the husband. “ You’d be bigger than the Lord himself. I should hate to be under you. But come, this boy’s tired; show him his bed.”

Mrs. Higglesey laid down her knitting, apparently acquiescing in the reasonableness of this command. Since her first rude reception of Jotham she had been quite civil to him. Perhaps his handsome face had won her, or perhaps she really had no special objection to keeping him, only that her rough nature must manifest itself. Taking the candle in her hand, she bade the boy follow her, leaving Mr. Higglesey and his pipe in the dark. Up a flight of narrow back stairs she went, turning at the top to caution Jotham not to hit his head

against a beam which jutted down so low that every grown person must stoop in passing under it.

At the top of these stairs there was a small chamber, in which were a bed, a chair, and a pine table. The place was not very inviting. It was not like the boy's neat chamber at home, to which he ascended over his mother's nicely carpeted stairs. In that chamber there were pictures hanging on the walls, a pretty chamber-set, a carpet, a stove, and books. Here there was nothing; and, as the woman was fearful he might set the house on fire, she told him she would wait outside until he could spare the candle. Such as the chamber was, however, satisfied our poor self-outcast, who, three hours before, was contemplating plunging into the woods to lie down and die. Any bed was acceptable to him, and he thanked the woman with a smile that won her heart. When she returned to the kitchen with her light and had resumed her knitting, her husband turned to her, and suddenly remarked, —

“Betsey, I've got an idee!”

“Well, what is it, Enoch?”

“Why, I think I'd better keep this boy. He's a right handy fellow.”

“Well, what of that? He'll have to eat, and you'll have to pay him. 'Twill only make cost.”

"And what if it does? The fact is, Betsey, you and I are getting old, though you don't seem to know it. I can't do so much as formerly. I used to send off my men in the fall, and then I'd go through the winter alone; but I can't do it now. I git tired."

"Well, what of it? You can't afford to hire."

"I know I can't afford to pay much. — By the way, I left five hundred dollars to-day at the bank. Old Ryder paid me at last, and I thought 'twas best to chuck it into the bank as quick as possible, so it might be on interest, you know. — But about this boy; I might pay him a little, you see, just enough to pacify him, and keep him this winter to do my chores. I reckon he'd work cheap, for his father has sent him out huntin' after a place, and I reckon he'd be glad of a place most anywhere."

"But we'd have to board him," expostulated Mrs. Higglesey.

"I know it; but we live kind o' cheap in the winter, you know, and besides there's always remnants good enough for a boy. Of course, boys can't expect everything. And don't you see, Betsey, besides helping me, he could help you. He could bring in your wood and water, and he'd be here when I'm gone, so he could tie up the cows and feed the pigs. Then you could find

time to knit and sew. You are always complainin' for want of time."

Mrs. Higglesey looked straight in her husband's eyes, and considered. She revolved the subject in all its bearings, and having finally satisfied herself that the board could be so managed as to cost very little, and that really she would be a gainer in time, she consented to the proposal. "Provided," she added, "you don't have to pay him too much."

With this conclusion, the couple fastened their doors, shut the stove to make the fire secure, and retired.

CHAPTER IV.

THANKSGIVING.



BADIAH!" said Grandma Wilson, in an excited manner, not many days after the decision to spend Thanksgiving with the family of their only son.

Mr. Wilson looked up as the old lady spoke. She was reading a letter which a neighbor had kindly brought from the village post-office, and her face had grown suddenly pale.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Wilson, laying down his newspaper.

"Such trouble!" she replied. "I declare I don't know what to do. This letter is from Josiah's wife, and the poor woman is in a hard situation. I won't wait for Thanksgiving, — I'll go right down now. I'm sure I can do them good."

"But what is the matter?" asked grandfather, again. "You haven't told me yet."

"No, I haven't. Well, listen, and I'll read. Mary says, —

"DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER, — We received your very welcome letter, saying that you would spend Thanksgiving with us. Nothing could give us greater pleasure were we as we have been. As it is, we are truly walking in the midst of troubles. Annette is very ill; the doctor calls it brain fever. She has quite lost her reason, talks incoherently sometimes; at others, of Jotham, begging him to be a good boy, and imploring him not to go to sea. But this is not our greatest trouble. We could view this as a dispensation of Providence to which we could submit; but we have a greater sorrow, — Jotham is gone, we know not where. We can find no trace of him. On the very day that Annette was taken ill he disappeared. His father directed him to go to school; and I went upstairs to Annette, who was taken with a headache and chills. When I came down again Jotham was gone to school, as I supposed. But at noon he did not come home, and Harry said he had not been at school. Then we grew anxious. Night came, and he did not come. Annette's illness increased and we sent for a physician. By the next day she was delirious and in

her wildness she began to plead with Jotham not to go to sea. We have not yet told her that he is away, but we have searched the city for him. We have been to the wharves and the vessels. No one has seen or heard from him.’”

“Strange!” interposed the old gentleman, as the reader paused a moment. “Strange what ails that boy! A brighter, smarter boy is seldom found. A good boy, too, when under good influences; and that’s just the trouble, I do believe. It is just because he *must* be under good influences in order to be good; for, the moment the influence is changed, he changes. He seems to lack a balancing power within himself. He yields to others too easily. He ought to have his own thoughts of right and wrong, and within himself to have an independence of his own.”

“I am sure,” returned grandmother, “he always was independent. You could see that in the very manner of his speaking. He always had a lofty bearing.”

“He had a swagger,” returned grandfather; “a sort of pompous way of showing off. I don’t call it independence, exactly. It was rather the reverse of independence, for it showed a *dependence* upon the good

opinions of others. He wanted to be thought grand, therefore he tried to appear so. That has helped to spoil him, because when bad boys came around him with high-sounding words, he wanted to be just as smart as they, or a little smarter. Ah, it is yielding to bad boys that has ruined him! He hadn't moral firmness enough to resist them. I am sure he does not want to be ugly. It is not his nature."

"But what shall we do?" asked grandmother. "The letter goes on to say that they would be glad to see us at Thanksgiving, but fear we would not enjoy the visit. As though we would not be happy in trying to sympathize with them! I tell you, father, just what I think."

"Well, what is it?"

"Why, I ought to go right down there now, and stay till Thanksgiving. Then you could come after me."

"But you cannot go alone in the cars at your time of life, and with your feeble health."

"Yes, I can. I can manage just as well as you; and I am sure I can do good there. Only think how I could stay by Annette. Dear child! I long to be beside her now. How I could soothe her, and bathe her fevered head! And then what a comfort I'd be to

Josiah and Mary! You could stay here alone with Sally Ann, — couldn't you?"

"La, yes! I could stay alone well enough; but I'm afraid you can't go alone so well as you think."

"Why, yes I can. Haven't I been there many times with you? I know every crook and turn of the way. I can go alone as well as not."

"Well, perhaps you can. At any rate you can try. They need somebody to comfort them, that's certain."

"And I'm just the one to do it. Sally Ann!

The girl heard the loud call and came in from the kitchen.

"Sally Ann, you go right up to the attic, and bring me down that empty trunk. I'm going to Josiah's by the first train to-morrow morning."

"Going to Josiah's, Miss Wilson? What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say. Annette is dreadful sick, and I'm going to see her."

"Annette sick, Miss Wilson? Well, well! She's a good child, — too good for this earth! I found that out last summer. How she bore with Jotham! though sometimes she'd get kind of out of patience with him, but who wouldn't? Oh, she used to talk so pretty to

him ! Well, I'm afraid she'll die. Good folks always do die."

"Not always," replied Mrs. Wilson. "We'll hope for the best. Go get the trunk."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the girl, hastening up to the attic.

As soon as she was gone, grandmother said, "You see I didn't mention Jotham. There's no use in telling of him. 'Twould only disgrace him in the minds of people."

"Just so," responded grandfather. "We'll keep quite still, and may be the boy'll come back. I can't believe he's gone for good. He'll find he's got a hard row to hoe out in the world, taking care of himself. He doesn't know anything about work, but he'll have to work somewhere. If he's gone to sea, he'll have a tough time."

"Oh, dear!" sighed grandmother. "I do hope he hasn't gone to sea. It's dreadful to think of."

At that moment Sally Ann returned with the trunk, and Mrs. Wilson arose from her chair.

"I'll have to be busy to-day, Sally Ann. I've got to leave everything in your care while I'm gone; but I'm sure you'll do the best you can."

"That I will, Miss Wilson, you may depend; and I

reckon I know how pretty well; I've been here long enough."

"Yes, you've been a good girl here; I'm not afraid to trust you, but there's a good deal to do before Thanksgiving, you know, always. However, butter-time's about over, — that's one good thing."

"How long shall you stay, Miss Wilson?"

"I don't know. As long as I am needed. Father here'll come down to Thanksgiving, and if the dear child's better, maybe I'll come home then."

Very busy was the old lady all day. Grandfather lent his assistance in all her plans, and they did not forget that though Jotham was away, and Annette ill, there was one left to be made happy. Many good things went into the trunk for Harry, and many little delicacies for the sick were packed there also, for grandmother said, "There's no knowing what may be wanted."

The morning came, and the resolute old lady went. Mr. Wilson carried her to the depot, and returned to his home alone. He sat down by his bright fire with his newspaper, and read till he could find nothing more. The markets, the stocks, the general news, and even the advertisements passed under his scrutiny. Then he folded his paper, sat back in his arm-chair, and

looked at the low rocking-chair standing empty in the opposite corner. He thought of the many years he had seen the fair, round face of his partner smiling from that seat as it was drawn up before the fire while her busy fingers knitted the socks; and now the house seemed empty. He hardly knew what to do. He took off his spectacles and polished them the third time, called the cat and stroked her fur in token of her mistress, stirred the fire six times, yawned, dozed, and yawned again, and finally walked to the window.

"I do declare!" he said to himself. "The house is still as the grave, except the ticking of the clock, and that seems like the knell of time ticking off the fatal strokes that are never to return. It will tick me to the grave pretty soon. Well, let it come. There's another life beyond the bounds of time. While I do live in this world, I will do the best I can, and that is all God requires of us. I believe I'll go down to Mr. Hanson's; Julia'll want to know about Annette."

Very soon the old gentleman was walking down the street, assisted by his stout cane, and, as he came into Mr. Hanson's kitchen he received a warm welcome, but Julia was shocked at the tale he told her.

"Poor Annette!" she said, "I'm so sorry she's sick."

Grandfather wanted to speak of Jotham. He was yearning for sympathy concerning the wayward boy; but by a great effort he suppressed his inclination.

"I'll come down and see you, Mr. Wilson," said Julia. "You'll be very lonely without grandmother. Why, I never knew her go away without you."

"No, she never did," replied the old man; "and I tell you, even the cat misses her."

Before the week closed Mr. Wilson had visited every neighbor within his reach, and at each place he received a ready condolence. All respected him, and now they strove to cheer him. The men came to sit with him evenings, and the women sent frequent inquiries to know whether he was comfortable and whether he had heard from Annette.

This journey was a great event in the life of old Mrs. Wilson. It seemed to her a vast responsibility to take charge of herself and trunk in the hurrying cars; but she was willing to do anything for the comfort of the afflicted family. All the way her heart was full of sympathy, and she longed to be there. Yet, when the journey was ended, when the surprise and joy of her reception was over, and she stood beside Annette's bed, she was sadder than before. She had not anticipated so great a change in her darling.

Annette lay with her lips parted, her short breath coming and going in thick, hot respirations, her silky hair cut close to her head, and her eyes wandering in unconsciousness.

"Poor child!" said grandmother, taking her thin, burning hand in hers, while tears dropped upon her cheeks. "Poor child! I didn't expect to see you so low. You don't know me, — do you? No, you do not even know I'm here. May the Lord be with you and bring you up again!"

With this prayer in her heart, grandmother drew a chair to the bed, and there she installed herself.

"Now, Mary," she said to the mother, "you must go away and rest. You look all worn out. Just tell me about the medicine, and I'll stay here."

Mrs. Wilson quietly yielded to her mother-in-law. She felt that she could perfectly rely upon her judicious care, and, with a grateful "thank you," she soon left the room to seek the rest which during many days had been denied her.

Grandmother watched every movement of the suffering girl; bathed her face, her hands, and head; moistened her parched lips, and soon became established as her principal nurse. The doctor was quite satisfied

with the arrangement, for he saw that the old lady knew well the necessities of the invalid.

"It is very strange," grandmother mused, as she sat quietly by the bed,—"it is very strange that Annette should get this fever. A rosy-cheeked, healthy girl like her could not have taken so violent a cold, except through carelessness. Why can't young people be more careful of their health? Poor thing! I do hope she'll get well again. How she'll feel when she knows Jotham is gone!"

Nothing was said of Jotham in Annette's room, but when Mr. Wilson came in at night, after his mother's arrival, the old lady resigned her post by the bed, and went out to see him. They sat together a long time, and Mr. Wilson gave her an account of Jotham more detailed than had been written in the letter.

"I am very, very sorry," grandmother said. "When he came from our house, last summer, I did think he had decidedly reformed. I thought he would be a good boy, and he is so handsome and proud, that I rejoiced you had so noble a son."

Mr. Wilson sighed. "I thought he was doing well. I don't know but I did wrong myself. I ought to have inquired more particularly into his conduct. He went to school, stood high in his class, and I did not con-

sider that there might be unseen dangers. I declare, it came upon me like a cold shower-bath when the police-officer told me he was in the lock-up."

"In the lock-up, Josiah! What do you mean?"

"Didn't Mary write you about it?"

"Not a word."

"She didn't feel like it, I suppose. Between Jotham and Annette, her heart is almost broken. Well, I'll tell you. We were all feeling secure about Jotham; he had been a good boy, apparently, all the fall, when suddenly, one morning, a police-officer called and told me that he had been caught the night before stealing apples from the garden of an old lady a little way out. That shocked me, I can assure you."

"But, Josiah, was it really true? Did he really steal the apples?"

"Yes, mother, he was really caught beside the garden-fence, with a bag partly filled with the fruit. I paid the old lady twenty-five dollars."

"Poor Jotham!" said grandmother. "What could tempt him?"

"Well, I suppose those Thompson boys tempted him. I had frequently forbidden him their company, but their influence over him was greater than mine, and I suppose he did go with them secretly. They

were in the tree picking the apples, when Jotham was caught with the bag outside, and they escaped."

"When was this?" asked grandmother.

"It was just a day before he left us. I suppose that is the reason he went away. I reprimanded him. I felt that he needed it and deserved it. My patience was utterly worn with him. He had been repeatedly forbidden to go with those boys, yet he not only went, but must disgrace himself by joining them in robbing fruit-trees. I declare, I never felt so badly about anything; I could hardly keep at my business. I felt disgraced. To think that Jotham should go from a home of comfort, where he had been taught to know better, and stealthily join such boys, and then fall into the hands of the police, was more than I could endure. He deserved reproof, and he got it."

As Mr. Wilson rehearsed his son's conduct to his mother, his eyes flashed and his anger roused. Evidently, if Jotham had been present, he would have received another rebuke. The kind old mother looked steadily into the face of her son some minutes, then addressed him again.

"Josiah, you know I used to tell you that I thought you were too harsh with him. He could not be driven so well as some boys. Different people have different

dispositions. Harry can be ordered and he will obey, and Annette scarcely needs directing; but Jotham's impulsive nature requires tact. He must be drawn by love and moulded by affection. Noble motives must be set before him. A high aim must be given him."

"You tried that, mother. You offered him prizes for his lessons at school and for his good conduct, and he was very boastful of his ability to obtain those prizes. Yet you see they failed of keeping him."

"Well, Josiah, I hardly expected to be successful at first. I wanted to test him, and you see his ambition was stimulated, by having an aim, for a time. But, of course, he wearied of restraint. Had I been with him, when I saw that weariness coming, I would have devised a recreation that would be harmless, and, at the same time, refresh his ardent mind. He couldn't be quiet like Harry, and I would have watched every change in him, and would have adapted my advice to his necessities."

"But I couldn't spare time for such things, mother. I must be at my business."

"But you have your evenings."

"Yes, I have those; but that is nearly all the time

I have for reading my papers or anything of that kind."

"But, Josiah, if you had relinquished partly your own pleasure, and sought happiness by studying the needs of your children, you might have been spared this trouble."

Mr. Wilson did not reply. He realized the force of his mother's reasoning, and was somewhat conscience-stricken, but yet was unwilling to admit that he had been in error. He sat quite silent, thinking of the past, and wondering whether he could have taken another course with his son. At length the mother asked, —

"Have you made a thorough search?"

"I have done everything but advertise. After Annette grew delirious and pleaded with him not to go to sea, I visited every ship in the city."

"Hadm't you better advertise?"

"No; I'll not publish my disgrace in that way. He may go. He will have to get his own living, and perhaps that will do him good."

"Poor boy!" sighed grandmother. "I hope he isn't suffering."

"Let him suffer," replied Mr. Wilson, his indignation again rising. "He causes us to suffer. He has

brought sorrow and anguish to his home; let him feel anguish himself. He is breaking his mother's heart; let his own break. It will do him good."

"Don't," said the mother, deprecatingly; "don't speak so harshly. Be pitiful towards him. He may come home to-night. Who knows? He will not find life among strangers very easy, and distress may drive him home. Receive him kindly if he comes. Let not your severity drive him to despair, lest you injure where you would do good. Love, my son, was the cord which reared you; love is the great bond of the world. God is love."

Grandmother soon returned to Annette's room, leaving the father thinking; but he was too truly angry with Jotham to think with a right spirit. His pride of character had been touched. It seemed a disgrace, not to be wiped out, that Jotham should conduct as he had, and this last crime of leaving home so unceremoniously seemed not less than the other. The boy, in his distant refuge, judged his father with an unerring sagacity.

Faithfully, day after day, grandmother watched over Annette, and, after a time, her labors were rewarded. The fever subsided, and the girl slowly returned to consciousness. She was weak and ex-

hausted, but her eye assumed something of its natural expression, and she spoke rationally.

"I thank the Lord," said grandmother. "I will write home and tell her grandfather. He will be so happy to know it."

Some days elapsed before Annette inquired for Jotham or Harry, and then she received an evasive reply. They feared to excite her, and grandmother hoped that Jotham would soon return.

"He cannot live away," the old lady reasoned. "So tenderly as he has been reared, how can he endure the coldness of strangers? How can he get food and shelter just as the winter is coming on?"

The day before Thanksgiving grandfather left his desolate home and came to his loved ones. He could hardly wait for the day or the hours, he was in so great haste to go; yet when he came, and they asked him whether he had been lonely, he answered with an evasive smile,—

"Lonely! Pshaw! Never was so contented in my life. Things stayed where they were put. Didn't get bothered with a woman's tongue always rattling. It's fun to live alone. But how's Annette?"

"Oh, she's better, ever so much better. When

you get warm, you must go in and see her. She sat up nearly an hour, yesterday."

Thanksgiving morning came, and if the aged visitors were not in a home of so much hilarity as they had anticipated when they first proposed this visit, yet there was certainly a quiet happiness in the household, for though the truant was still away, Annette was alive, and gave promise of recovery. So, in the midst of sorrow, they yet had joy.

Annette sat bolstered up to eat her slight breakfast, and when she had finished she begged to see Jotham and Harry. Then they gently told her that only Harry could come, and, after consultation, they told her that Jotham was gone, they knew not where, and asked her if she could imagine where he might be. For a moment she gazed upon them wildly, and they feared a relapse of her delirium, but suddenly pressing her head between her hands as though to force thought, she answered, —

"Gone to sea, gone to sea."

"In what vessel?" eagerly asked the father. "I have inquired everywhere."

"I don't know, father, but oh! on that night he told me he should go and should never come home again."

"On what night, Annette? What do you mean?"

“Don’t you know? The night I followed him; I led him home, and where have I been since? I was so cold when I came home, — oh, so cold! — and then I went out of the cold into fire!”

They stood around her astonished, and she thought again.

“I told him I wouldn’t tell,” she murmured. “Well, I didn’t tell, but if he’s gone again, my father ought to know. Yes, father, he went out in the cold night, and I followed him. I found him behind the square rock, and I stayed there a long time, and I had no bonnet nor cloak. He came home, and I promised not to tell. I wouldn’t have told if he had kept his word. The next morning I had a headache and couldn’t get up. I haven’t seen him since.”

“And that was the very morning he left,” said the mother, in a despairing tone. “Oh, where is he? where is he?”

Annette lay back with a groan, and she sat up no more that day. He was gone beyond her reach. She was powerless, and through the long days in which she slowly recovered, she revolved all the incidents of that night and then often said, —

“He has gone to sea. Poor Jotham! If I could only get him back again.”

CHAPTER V.

FIRST TRIAL AT WORK.



JOATHAM was too tired to fall immediately to sleep. His whole system seemed in pain. Two days and a night of exposure to November winds and cold, without food, had thoroughly exhausted him. Besides, the bed on which he lay was harder than his own at home, and seemed chilled, like a bed long unused. He turned and thought. There was no curtain at the window, and when he looked up a few faint stars seemed mocking him in the distance.

Then he thought of Joseph, sent away from a good place on a false accusation, "and all for me," he said to himself. "I wish I hadn't touched the apple. It wasn't mine,—I had no right to it. What if I did leave a cent to pay for it? How do I know the man wanted to sell it? I had no right to buy his property without his leave. Oh, dear! What a bad boy I have been! What will become of me? What shall I do? Annette

used to tell me to pray. Grandmother told me to pray. But I can't pray now. I'm too wicked. I wish I could go to sleep."

But it was long ere he could sleep. There was too much pain in his limbs to permit unconsciousness even if his mind had been at rest, and as the hours dragged along, thought became more intense.

"I couldn't be good now if I should try," he mused; "I've done so much that is bad. I wonder what these people think of me. I wonder what kind of people they are. How queer they seem! First they're cross, then good-natured. I thought the woman was going to turn me out at first, but then she grew quite good, and said good-night when she took my candle. Well, I don't know what will become of me, but father said I ought to work, and I suppose I must."

The tall clock in the kitchen struck twelve, and then one, before the boy was quieted. At last, sleep came, and troubles were for the time forgotten. Gentle slumber, which gives respite to the weary, careworn brain, rested quietly on the lids of the wayward boy. Shall we say that because he had done wrong no angels watched him? Does God withdraw his care from us because in our weakness we err and fall into sin? Rather let us believe that angels watch the

wicked as well as the good, waiting for signs of repentance that they may carry joyful news on high.

For a few hours Jotham slept; but Enoch Higglesey was an early riser. During more than fifty years, ever since he could remember in his earliest childhood, he had been a votary to work. Early and late his hands were busy, and during all those years he had risen at four o'clock. His motto was "early to bed and early to rise." When the ancient bell of the brass clock pealed out four strokes, the master of the house stepped on to the floor. He never waited, never lingered a moment, saying, "A little more slumber," although since he had grown old, nature sometimes suggested that a little more rest would certainly be very comfortable.

His first work in winter was always to fill the capacious kitchen stove with wood; his next to proceed to the barn, where there was never any lack of employment. As he was kindling his fire this morning, the idea occurred to him that it was a morning of unusual activity, and that a little help would be a great convenience. This was always Mr. Higglesey's thought if any one was in the house who could be pressed into service. He could work day after day alone rather than pay for assistance, but neither friend nor stranger

could visit him without being called into requisition for some purpose.

“Now that boy is just what I want,” he said to himself as he packed the wood into the stove. “I’ll just call him up.”

Leaving the stove he rushed up the stairs, and began to thump; but Jotham was too far gone to be roused. Mr. Higglesey stooped to avoid the beam, and ascended to the chamber-door which he opened.

“Holloa, here!” he called; but there was no reply.

“Holloa, I say!” and then some more thumps on the ceiling made so much rattling that the wearied boy turned and groaned.

“Holloa, I tell ye, you young sleepy-head!” thundered the man. “Can’t ye wake up? What ye made of?”

Jotham opened his eyes with a wondering stare, and the man continued, —

“Come, come, youngster, wake up here. Come down and help me. I’ve work enough for half a dozen. What’s the use to sleep your life away?”

It was some minutes before Jotham could fully comprehend where he was, or what was wanted. But at length his situation flashed into his mind, and with a

deep sigh, he answered, "Yes, sir, I'll come right down."

"Wall, make haste," returned the man, descending the stairs.

Jotham followed as soon as possible, and when he reached the kitchen he found Mr. Higglesey was standing with his lantern lighted, an old hat on his head, and striped mittens on his hands. Besides, he was enveloped in a stout farmer's frock. He looked warm and comfortable, and, as they stepped out at the door, he felt no shivers from the cold morning wind. But Jotham had no mittens, and his soft nice school suit was rather too thin for so much exposure. In addition to that he was not half rested, and, as he followed the stout old farmer to the barn, his teeth chattered, and chills crawled through his veins.

"I've got to go to town this morning," the farmer remarked, putting the key into the barn-door. "I promised Marston, the storekeeper up there, a load of oats, and he wants 'em to send off. He thinks he's made a good thing out of my trade, but he'll find, I reckon, that I'm enough for him. Holloa, here, Tom and Billy. How do you feel this morning?"

Jotham looked around to see who was addressed, and found it was the horses, who whinnied in reply to

their master. The boy had great respect for these horses, owing to their spirited overturn the night before, and he soon found that Mr. Higglesey had an equal regard for them.

"Pull down some hay from that highest scaffold," said the master. "That's for the horses. I never give them anything but the best. It don't pay to keep 'em poor. I must have horses that can go ahead on the road. I can't be all day out."

Jotham took a long-handled rake, made for the purpose, and began to rake the hay from the high scaffold. This labor reminded him of the morning previous when he lay cooped on just such a scaffold and saw the hay disappearing in the same manner as it now came down. He almost trembled as the idea suggested itself that some poor boy might be up there now; but his common sense shook off the delusion, and he continued at his work.

"Give 'em a good feeding," continued the farmer. "They must be off by daylight. That's it. Now go over in that corner and pitch out some corn-stalks for the cows; then get some meadow hay from the bay there for the young critters. That's good enough for them, and there's some bean-vines you can throw out to the sheep. Fly round now. I'll

be mixing up some meal for the fatting oxen. Beef's pretty high this fall, and I'm going to make mine weigh. I'll make 'em bring in the money."

Jotham followed these directions with skill and alacrity. The old man spoke with authority, and the boy saw no way but to obey.

"Now," said Mr. Higglesey, when he had finished stirring the meal, "I'm going in a minute. You can be emptying the rest of those bags. Tip 'em up into that big meal-chest. I've got to fill 'em pretty soon. I'll bring the milk-pails when I come back."

The farmer went in, congratulating himself that he had so good help this morning. He replenished the fire, warmed his hands by the stove, and then brought the milk-pails from the pantry near. Hastening back to the barn, he found Jotham trying to lift a heavy bag to the top of the meal-chest. There were two or three bushels in the bag, and it quite overpowered the boy's strength.

"Bah! you're a weak little thing," remarked the farmer, giving the bag a pull which brought it to the desired location. "Well, never mind, you'll grow stronger. Untie the bag now and let the meal into the chest, while I bring up another. That's it.

You're nobody's fool, that's sartin, if I did find you sittin' on a stone. Can you milk?"

"I don't know, sir. I never tried."

"Wall, you can learn, I s'pose. There must always be a first time."

"How many cows do you keep?" asked Jotham.

"Wall, we milk twelve through the summer, but some on 'em are dry now, and I reckon there's only seven to milk this morning. You take this pail and try that one in the corner. She milks pretty easy. My old woman milks sometimes; but I guess you can do it this time."

Jotham took the pail and listened to the old farmer's directions, but his thoughts just then were turned to something else. He had been taking a survey of himself by the light of the lantern, and he was not well pleased. The pretty snit of dark gray which he wore was covered with dust. The hay and the straw had fallen upon it, and now those bags of meal had turned the front part of it as white as the coat of a miller. He began to brush it down with his hand.

"Pshaw! don't stop for that!" expostulated the farmer. "We can't mind dirt when there's so much

to do. Let me show you how to milk. Here's a stool."

The cows were ranged side by side in the stalls, and fastened by their heads. Mr. Higglesey passed in behind them, followed by Jotham daintily picking his way by the light of the lantern. The farmer's heavy boots minded little where they stepped, but Jotham's thin congress shoes were not accustomed to this walking, and he moved with great caution.

"Here's the cow," said Mr. Higglesey, placing the stool beside a large cow, who looked as though she had seen many summers. "I'll take the cow next her, and if you need any help, just let me know."

Jotham looked at the stool and the cow, and hesitated. He had half a mind to say he would not do it; but the farmer did not notice his hesitation. He saw nothing disagreeable, nor once thought that the fastidious boy could be disgusted with what to him was a part of natural life.

"Make haste," he said, turning to his own cow; and Jotham unresistingly took a seat on the three-legged stool. He had seen the men milk on his grandfather's farm, but his own hands had never attempted

the operation. The farmer turned his head back and gave some directions, and soon a faint stream descended to the pail, followed by others.

"Go ahead," said the farmer; "you're doing well;" while into his own pail the large streams came thick and fast.

Jotham kept trying, but it seemed very hard and disagreeable. The old cow, the most patient of her kind, bore long with these efforts. She would not willingly lift her foot, but it did seem to her that some foolish person was at work upon her, and at last she began to move.

"So!" called the farmer, seeing her uneasiness; then, as he finished his cow and arose to go to another, he came to Jotham's side and gave him a little practical instruction. The boy tried to follow it, and for a short time succeeded a little better. Mr. Higglesey left him, and once more the cow exercised her patience. But all patience must have an end, and so the cow finally thought. An extra pinch from Jotham was too much for endurance, and, lifting her foot, she gave a vigorous thrust at the intruder. Over went the pail and the milk, and over went Jotham, stool and all. The milk flew up on to the clothes which were previously covered with the meal, and now there was a

conglomeration, or paste, covering the nice school-suit.

"Oh, dear!" groaned the boy, trying to gather himself up from the floor beneath the cow.

"What's the matter?" called the farmer, extending his head forward to discover the extent of the catastrophe. "Ha! got kicked over, have you? Wall, you must be a nateral fool if you couldn't milk that cow. She's been on this farm more'n ten years, and she never kicked before. Spilled your milk?"

"Yes, sir," sighed Jotham. "It is all gone."

"Wall, you'll catch it from Betsey, I reckon. Milk makes butter; and she's pretty careful of her butter I can tell you."

Jotham sighed inwardly. He saw a sample of Mrs. Higglesey's temper the night previous, and he dreaded to irritate it. He dreaded to go into the house; but there was no alternative. He must have some breakfast, and this was the only way of obtaining it. One thought of home flashed across his mind, one mental glance at Harry, probably then quietly sleeping in his bed, and then Mr. Higglesey called him.

"Here, seeing you can't milk, take the lantern and go up to the corn-barn; bring down a measure of

corn and scatter it about the floor to be ready for the hens. They'll be up soon."

Jotham took the lantern and a measure in his hands, and went out. The cold wind struck him as he emerged into the open air, but he dared not pause. Mr. Higglesey had pointed out the corn-barn the night before, at some distance from the large barn, and now the boy found his way to it alone. There was plenty of corn in it, shelled and unshelled, and it took but a moment to fill the measure, with which, on his return, he strewed the barn-floor.

"Now," called Mr. Higglesey, "you might as well be pumping. The horses and cattle must drink by and by, and you might fill up the trough."

The pump was slightly sheltered by a small board erection, but it was cold there, and the handle made the boy's unused fingers pretty numb; but he soon found that the exercise offset the cold. The blood mounted to his cheeks as he vigorously plied his arms up and down. It seemed as though the trough would never fill. It was a huge thing, from which forty cattle were expecting to drink. When it was at last full, Jotham's forehead was covered with beads of perspiration, his arms ached, and he felt very much like dropping to the ground. Just then Mr. Hig-

glesey came out with his pails of milk. He was delighted at the sight of the water, — for the pumping, he always declared, was the hardest thing he had to do. He would have an easier pump, but it would cost to change, and he had rather work his body to the last extremity than pay out money. He congratulated himself as he went into the house that the water was pumped for one morning, and therefore he felt quite favorably disposed toward his guest.

When Jotham entered the kitchen again, he found the table spread for the morning meal; and this time Mrs. Higglesey had taken the trouble to move it to the middle of the room. But there was no white cloth on it, and it seemed hard and cheerless with only that painted covering. However, a dish of smoking potatoes compensated for other defects; for the labors of the morning had stimulated the hunger of the young workman.

“‘Pears to me there aint so much milk as common,” said Mrs. Higglesey, looking into the pails.

“No,” replied Mr. Higglesey, “the boy got kicked, and lost his.”

“That’s jest the way on’t,” returned the harsh voice of the woman. “It’s always jest so when there’s a boy round. They’re nothing but bothers.”

But Mr. Higglesey's mind was still upon that trough of water, and he answered, laughingly, —

“Oh, boys aint so bad! They're mighty handy sometimes. You see he never milked before, and what could you expect of him?”

“Well, I don't care what I expect; I don't want to lose my milk. There's butter forty cents a pound, every cent on't, and going higher every day. Do you think I want my milk spilt over? I tell you, Enoch Higglesey, I won't have such work. I'll make a noise about it, I tell you.”

“Oh, you can make a noise any time!” returned the man, going to the kettle for hot water, which he carried to a wash-basin, calling to Jotham to follow him.

“Dip in,” said the man; and the delicate hands of the school-boy were washed in the same dish with those of the coarse farmer, and wiped upon the same towel. The incongruity between them struck the mind of the man, and he said, “Mighty soft hands you've got, boy. Reckon they never did much work. When they've been at it as many years as mine have, they'll get toughened. Come, old woman, put on your coffee.”

Mrs. Higglesey obeyed; and her husband pointed to a chair beside the table, saying, —

“Sit down, boy, and help yourself.”

Jotham was, at that moment, thinking he was unfit to go to the table, his clothes were so soiled; but he saw that the farmer and his wife did not stop to think of those secondary things. They had two aims in life: one was to make money; the other, to keep it. And as they made money by work, labor became the first object of their thoughts; and as much money could be saved by the manner of eating, and the quality of the food, therefore the table arrangements were in accordance with economy.

The farmer sat down with his striped frock just as he had come from the cows, and Mrs. Higglesey's faded dress and wide check apron were scarcely more presentable. Jotham soon saw that, much as his own clothes were soiled, he looked like a gentleman compared with his rustic companions, and, without more thought, he took a potato and commenced his repast. There was only a dish of fried salt pork besides the potatoes and a plate of brown bread; but genuine hunger is not over-particular. It is only those who never get truly hungry that are fastidious. Real hunger can eat anything. Let almost any person abstain from

food two days, and he will be able to drink barley coffee sweetened with molasses as freely as Jotham drank it that morning. He was thankful for his breakfast and ate it accordingly.

“Now,” said Mr. Higglesey, rising from the table, when the meal was finished, “we might as well go out and put up the oats. Come, boy.”

Again Jotham put on his cap and followed his master. The oats were packed away in a large bin, and bag after bag was filled. Jotham noticed that in measuring, instead of drawing the stick straight across the “half-bushel” into which they had been dipped, the farmer managed to hollow each one, and at last he ventured to speak of it.

“Hold your tongue,” replied the man, sharply. “I know what I’m about. Marston thought he’d make a good bargain out of me, so he squeezed a cent off from every bushel, but I can take it out of the measure. If you tell of it though, I’ll lick the hide off your very body.”

Jotham did not speak again, but a feeling of contempt for the miserly man sprang up in his mind. Although so conscious of his own misdeeds, he despised dishonesty, and the scanty measures which they poured into the bags seemed to him the height of

meanness, and a train of reasoning arose in his thoughts.

"If I am so mean," he mused, "I'm as good as this man, and he feels pretty nicely over himself. He thinks he's done a shrewd thing; I think I'd be ashamed to do it. Well, I remember my Sabbath-school teacher used to say, all people had defects, some in one form, some in another; and that we must excuse each other on that ground. If my father had thought of that, he would not have been so cross to me, and then I would not have run away from home. I wonder what George and James Thompson think of me. I wonder where they are. They ought to have gone into the lock-up instead of me. They put me up to steal Mrs. Peckham's apples. I told them ever so many times that I wouldn't go, and I never would only, George said he'd tell my father about that knife. Oh, dear!"

While Jotham was thus reasoning, Mr. Higglesey, too, was thinking, but his thoughts were in another direction. He was estimating how much he would be likely to save by his scant measure, and was thinking, "Wall, a little here, and a little there makes a good deal. The way to do is to save all we can."

"Boy," said the farmer, when the oats were all

measured, "you'd better stay here till I come back. I can give you enough to do. There's that pile of pumpkins, — I want a lot of them chopped up for the cattle; then there's all the cattle to water, the stable to clear, the pigs to feed, and the cattle to be fed occasionally. If you don't know how to do it, my old woman, she can show you. She's as good at it as I am. There's no knowing how long I may be gone. I've got to get these harnesses mended."

There was nothing very inviting in this proposal. It would not be very agreeable to work all day, but how else could there be any dinner? Jotham agreed to stay, for he dreaded starting off again with no money in his pocket. The remembrance of his weariness and hunger was fresh in his mind, and he thought it would be better to work and have some dinner, even though the food was coarse. At least it was wholesome, and a poor home was far better than none.

Never before had he so exerted himself to please as this day. Faithfully he performed every duty that the farmer had laid before him, repulsive as it was. As he knew scarcely anything of such work, his natural intelligence served in the place of practical experience. Mrs. Higglesey often came out to see that everything was right, and her instructions assisted him greatly.

She seemed to have become reconciled to the loss of her milk, for although her tones were coarse and harsh, Jotham saw that she was not angry. In fact, she was beginning to think it would be a very good plan to secure the services of so smart a boy, and she busied her thoughts contriving how little it would do to offer him in pay.

“One thing is true,” she said to herself, “it is easier to rise than to fall; so we’ll not offer him too much at first. I shouldn’t wonder if we could make a good thing out of him.”

CHAPTER VI.

CHURNING AND PUMPING.

A large, ornate, decorative initial letter 'G' in a black and white woodcut style, featuring intricate scrollwork and floral patterns. It is positioned at the start of the first paragraph.

RE Mr. Higglesey came home, the work at the barn was completed, and Jotham was in the house. But he was not idle. Mrs. Higglesey's conscience would never permit idleness, and as she could really find nothing more to do at the barn just then, she had taken advantage of the opportunity to have her wood-box filled, her pails of water replenished, and several other small assistances secured.

"I declare," she said to herself, "it's right handy, as Enoch says, to have some one to help."

The farmer's breakfast had been so early that Jotham grew quite faint before noon. He did wish he could just have an apple or a piece of bread and butter when he came in from the barn; but he dared not mention it to the broad-faced woman, who was busy with her pans of milk, apparently not thinking

it possible that the boy could be hungry or even weary. A boy, in her eyes, was a piece of machinery to be wound up in the morning and to be kept running all day with the steadiness of a watch.

At twelve o'clock Mr. Higglesey had not returned, and Mrs. Higglesey, remarking that she "never made much fuss over dinner when he was away," produced a bowl of bread and milk, which she placed before Jotham, at the same time making a cup of tea for herself.

"There's nothing so good for children as milk," she observed, as she handed him the bowl. "It makes 'em grow right up like weeds."

Jotham was quite fond of milk; he used often to beg his grandmother for bread and milk; but that was rich and nourishing, for Grandmother Wilson stirred in her cream, while this which Mrs. Higglesey brought had been skimmed till its color was a delicate shade of blue. But Jotham's keen appetite compensated for the poor quality, and without complaint he ate the whole, only wishing he could have more. He had noticed beside the stove a box standing on legs and a crank attached to the box, and when he had finished his bread and milk, Mrs. Higglesey called his attention to it.

"See that," she said. "Did you ever churn?"

"No, ma'am."

"Well, 'tisn't much to learn. You've only to turn that crank round till the butter comes. I put in the cream some time ago, so as to have it warming. You've nothing else to do, and you might as well be turning the crank."

Jotham moved his chair beside the churn and began to turn. The crank went over heavily, for the cream was thick and stiff, but gradually it softened, and presently it began to slosh against the sides of the box in genuine cream fashion. The boy looked at the clock occasionally, still turning, till an hour elapsed. His arms and shoulders were weary; he changed hands often to rest himself, but still the cream continued that same dull slosh.

"I don't know what ails it," Mrs. Higglesey said, removing the lid and scraping the froth down with a knife. "It acted just so last week. I thought 'twould never come. I s'pose it's because the cows have come to the barn. Cream never does come well, right between hay and grass. Well, it's lucky you've got nothing else to do, so you can keep at it."

She closed the churn, and the churner recommenced his labors. She combed her hair by the



MATTHEW ROBINSON SC.

A HARD DAY'S WORK. — Pages 106 and 107.

kitchen glass, took her knitting and sat down. He turned and turned the iron crank till his stomach grew faint again, his hands were nearly ready to blister, and his face was covered with hot flushes. She knit and knit, unmindful of his weariness. Her feet were on the hearth of the stove, and she seemed quite contented and comfortable.

"It's time Enoch was here," she remarked, at length. "I may as well put on his potatoes. He never's quite contented with bread and milk, though I made him eat it last churning-day, for the cream was full three hours coming."

"Three hours!" thought Jotham with a shiver of dread. "I've churned almost two, now. I can't stand it another hour, no way. My arms will break off."

Again he changed hands by way of relief, but both arms were so tired that changing was of little use. He hadn't been thoroughly rested since the pumping in the morning. Slowly, wearily, another half hour dragged away, and still the same splash was ringing in the boy's ears. Mrs. Higglesey came again to the churn with her knife in her hand, and once more the froth was scraped down. She was becoming impatient.

"I don't want to lose this week's churning," she said; "just when butter's growing higher every day. Churn faster, boy. Maybe if you churn faster it will come."

An inward sigh was Jotham's only response. Taking the crank once more in his red, burning palms, he began to turn with increased velocity. The hot blood flushed into his forehead; putting up one hand he rubbed the moisture from his brow and threw the hair away from his temples, then changed hands and sent the obdurate cream against its prison sides in splashing fury. Mrs. Higglesey sat complacently rejoicing that it was not herself doing the work, though her broad hands and stout arms looked much more fitted for it than did the tender hands and unused arms that were taking her place. Just then the horses passed the kitchen windows, and Mr. Higglesey called. The woman arose and went to the door.

"Where's the boy?" asked the farmer.

"He's in here, helping me."

"Tell him to come out and help me put up Tom and Billy."

"You can't have him."

"Why can't I?"

"Because I want him. You've put up the horses a good many years, and I guess you can do it once more. I want the boy to churn."

"To churn!" echoed the man. "Wall, let him churn, then."

Jotham's hopes went down. He would much rather put up Tom and Billy than to churn, for he was sure his arms would break if he had to turn there much longer. But Mr. Higglesey had churned many times in his life, and he, too, preferred putting up the horses. Without a word he went to the barn alone, and the churning continued uninterrupted. Little blisters came on the inside of the tender hands, but he dared not show them, for the woman's heavy voice and brisk manner quite put him in awe. Evidently she expected to be obeyed in her own house, and how could a friendless, homeless outcast rebel against her? When Mr. Higglesey came in, the three hours were nearly expired, but the cream remained unchanged.

"What ails the stuff?" asked the man as his wife entered her complaints. "You didn't get it warm enough."

"Warm enough!" retorted the woman. "Do you think I don't know anything? I've had that churn

beside the stove the whole forenoon. It ought to be warm enough."

"Then I s'pose you got it too warm."

"Too warm! Of course that's the next thing to say. I tell you 't isn't too warm. I've churned forty years, and I guess I know how warm to have my cream."

"Pshaw! you can't always tell. You see the weather's different some days from others."

"Don't you think I know that, Enoch Higglesey? I don't go by the weather. I can tell by myself."

Jotham, puffing in exhaustion, ventured to speak in a mild voice,—

"My grandmother keeps a thermometer, and she holds it into the cream to try it."

"A 'mometer!" repeated Mrs. Higglesey, scornfully. "Well, let her keep her 'mometer. I don't want none of yer new-fangled notions. I've churned forty years, and I guess my finger'll tell how warm the cream is. Miss Clarke, up here, she hangs a 'mometer in her dairy-room and keeps her room just so warm; but I'm not going to pay a dollar for a 'mometer. I can tell when a room's warm enough by my feelings."

Jotham said no more. It was apparent that new inventions, if they cost money, would never be accept-

able to Mrs. Higglesey. She preferred putting her dollars in the bank, and then treading in the self-same paths her fathers trod. With a resolute air she prepared Mr. Higglesey's dinner, and Jotham continued churning. .

"It beats all I ever did see!" she exclaimed, at last, when he had churned full four hours. "I'm afraid 'twill never come. It don't gain a bit."

"Put some salt in," said Mr. Higglesey, rising from the table at the side of the room, and smacking his lips at the close of his dinner.

"Well, I will. I never thought of that," and directly she allowed Jotham to pause while she poured in a cup of salt.

"Let me see what ails it," said Mr. Higglesey, coming forward and taking hold of the crank.

Jotham stopped with a thrill of relief. It seemed to him that one turn of that terrible machine by somebody else, would be a source of joy to him. He looked at the inside of his hands, and then he straightened his limbs, cramped by long sitting.

"I don't believe this'll come, mother," said Mr. Higglesey. "It looks just like that we had last fall. We sold that to Marston, you know, and he sent it off to the city. I guess you'd better sell this."

"I guess I won't. Not till it has been churned some longer, any way. What's the use to give up now? Let the boy churn."

"But I want him out to the barn, now. I want the horses watered, and the cattle ought to drink again, and there aint a mite of water pumped."

"Well, I want the churning."

"Let the churning go a spell. Come, boy; come out to the barn with me."

Jotham hardly knew which to obey, both seemed to possess so much authority, but, as Mrs. Higglesey did not speak again, he followed her husband, glad to be released. He gained little, however, for his first business was to fill that trough with water from the pump. Then the horses were to be combed, and the farmer called him to assist.

This was the most agreeable part of the labor to the incipient workman. A horse was always his delight, and these were fine, spirited animals. He could already distinguish Tom from Billy, although they were well mated.

"Tom's the smartest horse," he said to the farmer, as the two curried each his own beast.

"Wall, I reckon he is," returned the farmer, "though there aint much difference in 'em. They're smart crit-

ters. They'll take me to the city in four hours, and draw a pretty good load too."

"Can you go clear to the city in four hours?" asked the boy.

"Yes, any day."

Jotham thought of the two days during which he had walked in getting to the farmer's home, and he wondered how the farmer could go the same in four hours; but then he reflected that he had probably come by a longer route than the farmer took, and that the horses were swift travellers.

"You understand this business," said the farmer, watching the boy as he dexterously smoothed Tom's chestnut coat. "Guess you've worked at it."

"I've done it for fun," replied Jotham. "Old Joe Smith, the hostler, used to let me help him, and sometimes I'd get rides to pay."

"Wall, I'm glad you like it. I never like it very well; so, if you'll stay with me, I'll let you take care of Tom and Billy. You may keep 'em as shiny as you like. How should you like to stay with me?"

"I don't know," answered Jotham. "I don't know where to stay."

"Wall, you might as well stay with me as anybody. It's a bad time of year for getting work, and if your

father'd known anything about farming, he'd never sent you out jest the first of the winter. I don't believe there's another family in this neighborhood that wants a boy, and if you go further, you'll find it jest the same. Folks don't have much to do in the winter, and there's always more men and boys than places."

Jotham thought quite likely this statement was true, and he had a terrible dread of being homeless again. Besides, just now he was feeling more natural, for the horses had restored him a little to happiness. He liked to be near them, to rub their smooth sides, and his eye was filled with the beauty of their graceful proportions. He thought they were almost equal to his grandfather's colts which had so delighted him.

"Wall, what say, boy?" continued the farmer.
"Will you stay with me?"

Jotham, rubbing Tom's shoulder, was thinking it would be grand fun to ride on his graceful back, and he answered the farmer's question by asking another.

"If I stay, can I ride Tom sometimes?"

"Ride Tom! Wall, I don't know. Yés,—I don't care if you ride, that is,—if you know how to ride without being thrown."

"Yes, indeed I do. Joe Smith used to let me ride ever so much,"

"Wall, you can ride. But if you stay with me you'll have to work. We don't have drones in our line. All that we have must pay. That's the way to get along in the world."

Jotham's arms were still aching from the labors of the day, but his judgment and his experiences told him that it would not be wise to refuse the farmer's offer, and he answered, directly, "Yes, sir, I'll stay."

The supper at the side-table, the evening work at the barn, and all out-door duties were performed, and Jotham came in, hoping he might go to bed, or at least sit by the fire and rest; but Mrs. Higglesey had her own plans. She was determined to have some butter from that cream. She had churned at intervals since Jotham went out, hoping to see some signs of the desired separation of the buttery crumbs from the milk; but no change had yet shown signs of occurrng. The moment Jotham came in, she called him.

"There, I'm glad your work is done," she said. "Now take a chair and sit down again by this churn. I never did see anything like this cream; but I'm not going to give it up."

Jotham took his place by the churn, and again began to turn.

"Faster," said the woman, and then he turned more swiftly, while the old farmer sat before the oven with his pipe under the flue. Around and around went the crank, while the weary young workman watched the clock, wishing that would go with as great speed as his hands were using. An hour seemed to him like three; but nevertheless it ended at last, and the cream remained cream still.

"What's the use of trying?" said Mr. Higglesey, at length, knocking the ashes from his pipe, and closing the oven door. "I've seen cream before, and I tell you, Betsey, that won't come. There's no use."

"But I'm not going to give it up," replied the woman. "I reckon I've got some perseverance. If you've got done smoking, take hold yourself."

Very obediently the husband came to the churn, and Jotham was once more released. The new workman began to investigate.

"I tell you, Betsey, pour in some hot water."

"And so spoil my buttermilk by having water in it."

"Who cares for the buttermilk? There's no use in churning here all night."

"No, of course you don't care; but I do. I want it to use."

A little longer Mr. Higglesey churned, and then rising he seized the tea-kettle and poured in the boiling water. Again he churned, but there was no butter.

"Pour out the cream," he exclaimed, at length, exasperated. "I'll carry it to Marston's to-morrow."

"I won't pour it out," replied the woman. "I'll let it stand and try it again to-morrow."

Jotham was thankful to be released, and soon Mr. Higglesey bade him go to bed.

"You don't need a light," said the woman. "Take care and not bump your head on the beam."

Cautiously he ascended the stairs, and, entering the small chamber, closed the door behind him. Then, by the light of the stars through the window, groping his way to the bed, he threw himself upon it, and burst into tears. Mr. Higglesey closed the door at the foot of the stairs, and then took a seat by the stove, while Mrs. Higglesey moved the churn back to await another day.

"I tell you, Betsey," he said, as the woman took

her knitting and returned to her chair, "this ere's a smart boy. It's a lucky hit that sent him to us."

"Have you made a bargain with him, Enoch?"

"I asked him if he'd stay, and he said he would. I s'pose I shall have to pay him a little."

"I wouldn't give him much. You'll have to board him, you know."

"Yes, I know; and that's about as much as his work is worth, these short days. But he'll have to have clothes, you know."

"Yes, Enoch; and now I think of it, wouldn't it be a good plan to agree to give him his board and clothes? I reckon I could fix up his clothes cheaper than we could pay him any other way."

"That's a good idee, Betsey. You're pretty good at planning, that's sartain."

"Nobody can beat me, I reckon," she answered, complacently shrugging her shoulders. "It was a lucky thing for you, Enoch Higglesy, when you got me. I've saved you many a dollar. You'd never been so rich as you are, if you'd had some women."

Mr. Higglesy was too wise to dispute this point, and his wife retired well satisfied with herself and with the world in which she lived.

Jotham, on his bed, wept long and freely, like a

girl full of sorrows. He was utterly exhausted. It was the first day of toil his life had ever known, and it had been of unceasing severity. He was sure he would not live long if he must work like that every day; but, then, what could he do? Where could he go?"

A little voice, low down in his heart, whispered, "Go home," and he almost started to obey the summons. He thought he would run down the stairs, out at the door, and away, nor would he pause till he reached his father's home. There he would throw himself upon his knees and implore his parents' forgiveness. Nay, more, he would even submit to penances and bear punishments till his father would be satisfied that he would reform. Yes, he would go home that very minute; and he sprang from the bed for the purpose; but, as he looked through the window, he was recalled to the difficulties of starting off to walk twenty-five or thirty miles in the darkness of so cold a night. Experience warned him of the weary road he would have to travel, and he hesitated.

"I'll not go to-night," he said to himself, "but to-morrow morning I'll start."

With this resolution he retired; but sleep did not

immediately come to him, and, as he lay awake, new thoughts counteracted his resolution.

"Would it not be mean and babyish to go home?" he asked himself. His father had told him he ought to work for his living, and, perhaps, if he should go home, his father would remind him of his reply, how he had boastingly said he guessed he could work; and, if he should fail now, on the very first day of his trial, it would poorly accord with his boast. Besides, he was not sure of a welcome reception by his father; and he would have to explain his conduct, tell where he had been, and be subject to an inquisition. Of course all his acquaintances knew by this time that he was gone, and, if he should go home so soon, they would laugh at him, and say he had no spunk.

"No, I'll not go home," he said, emphatically, when he had revolved the subject in all its bearings.

He was a little rested now, and his courage revived a little. He couldn't help wishing this home was like his grandfather's. He thought it would be a real pleasure to work on a farm if he could only live with such people as his grandfather and grandmother. They were so kind and intelligent, and their home so pleasant, that it would be delightful to live with them. They never made any one

work too much, nor were they ever stingy of their food.

However, the question was not whether he could work with such people, but could he work here? Here was a place offered him, and he was penniless. If he should leave, he had nowhere to go. He might have to take lodgings in a barn again, and where would he get food? It would be better to stay here. Yes, he would stay. Of course the farmer would pay him, and then, when he had earned some money, he would go home and show his father what he could do.

Having made this resolution, he was more quiet. Naturally brave, he determined to persevere. He had only lost his courage because he had gone in crooked paths. Had he followed the straight road of integrity, no boy would have been more courageous than he. Quick in his impulses, ardent in his nature, with a brain capable of enlarged thought, and a social nature that sympathized with all about him, he might have been respected and happy but for the fatal yielding to bad companions. Boys whom he well knew were unsafe advisers he had permitted to lead him, and now he was reaping that which he had sown.

Sleep came at length, the eyelids drooped, but not till thoughts of Annette's oft-repeated words had sounded in his ears. It seemed as though he could hear her saying, "Pray;" and one brief prayer went from his heart to the God who he knew was watching him with love.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW CLOTHES.



HAVING finally concluded that the cheapest way of paying the new boy was by providing his clothes, Mrs. Higglesey's next plan was to procure those clothes at the cheapest rate. This subject occupied her thoughts through the night, and by morning she had an arrangement which was quite satisfactory. When Jotham came in to breakfast, having been at the barn since four, as on the preceding morning, Mr. Higglesey once more mentioned the subject of his remaining.

"You see, boy," he said, "you can't earn much anywhere this winter. If you can get your board and clothes, it is all you can expect. I'll give you that if you'll stay with me."

"Can't you give me any money?" asked Jotham, unwilling to work on quite so low terms.

"Wall, no, I can't afford to; and if I should, you'd

have to spend it for clothes; so it would be as long as it is broad."

Jotham hesitated. He wanted to earn some money so that he might have some to show his father if he should ever dare to go home.

"You can't do any better," pursued Mr. Higglesey. "Some folks only give a boy his board for what he does; but I don't want to be hard, — I'll give you your clothes."

Jotham consented at length. He could see no better way. He glanced at himself, and thought how sadly he had soiled his pretty school-suit, and how much he needed another, because he could not go home for others.

"This is only fit for the barn," he said, inwardly. "It is covered with dirt now."

Mrs. Higglesey, too, was looking at the suit, and she was forming a more economical plan. As soon as Jotham had assented to Mr. Higglesey's proposal, she introduced her idea.

"Now," she said, "them clothes you have on are too good to work in. Why didn't you bring some old clothes if you was going to work on a farm?"

"These are my old clothes," he answered, simply.

"They are! Well, they're good enough to wear to

meeting. You don't need anything better. We can rub the dirt off a little, and I can fix you up a suit to work in."

There was a slight twitching about the boy's mouth. He thought of the handsome garments, hanging in his closet at home, which his father had just purchased; but he knew they were useless to him now. He must submit to the circumstances he had brought upon himself.

"What are you thinking?" asked Mrs. Higglesey, sternly. "I tell you these clothes are too good to work in. There's no use in boys feeling stuck up."

"I'll do as you think best," answered the boy, awed by her frowning countenance.

This answer pacified her, and she ate her breakfast in self-satisfaction, thinking meanwhile that she would that very day make the boy a suit of clothes from some old ones Mr. Higglesey had cast aside.

"Come," said the farmer, when breakfast was finished; and Jotham immediately followed him.

"What are you going to do?" asked Mrs. Higglesey, as they were going out

"Boil potatoes," replied the man.

"Why can't you do it alone? I want Jotham."

"So do I want him, and I reckon I've a right to him. I hire him."

"Yes, and who pays him? Don't I have all the trouble of the care of him? Haven't I got to fix his clothes, and do everything for him?"

"Wall, what if you have? You can't have him now. Churn yourself."

Mrs. Higglesey said no more, and Jotham followed the farmer to the house where the swine were kept. The man was quite delighted with his bargain, and was very jocose.

"I reckoned you might get hungry," he said; "so I thought we'd boil up a kettleful for you."

"You going to boil all those?" asked Jotham, in surprise, as the man brought forward some baskets of potatoes and apples.

"Yes. This won't last long. You bring some water. Take those pails and fill up the kettles here, while I fix the potatoes."

It was not very agreeable work; but Jotham knew he must accept whatever was ordered him. He brought the large pails full of water from the trough which had been filled by his own labor, then made the fires under the kettles, and then sat down to watch. The odor of the place was very disagreeable, for

several hogs had compartments within the building, and the steam from the kettles was not very sweet. Yet the boy was thankful to sit here, for it was comparative rest, and the labors of the previous day had caused a soreness throughout his system. The potatoes were nearly cooked, and he was sitting with his head resting wearily on a bench near, when some one suddenly accosted him.

"Holloa, here!" said the voice.

Jotham raised his eyes, and saw before him a man in a laborer's garb.

"Holloa, here!" repeated the man. "Where's Higglesey?"

"I don't know," answered Jotham. "In the house, or at the barn."

"And who are you?" continued the man.

"Jotham Wilson, sir."

"Jotham Wilson! Well, that's a new name to me. You don't live in these parts, I take it."

"I'm going to live herê, sir."

Jotham looked in the man's face as he replied, and, in spite of his dejection, there was a brightness in his eyes, and his replies were in a gentlemanly manner. The man gazed at him a moment.

"Are you related to Mr. Higglesey?"

"No, sir; I'm going to work for him."

"You are! Well, you've got a tough one to work for, that's a fact. He'll grind your eye-teeth out of you. You don't look like a farmer's boy; Where did you come from?"

"From Boston."

"You did! Well, you look like it. But I tell you, you must look out for Higglesey. He's a sharp one."

"Could I do any better?" asked the boy, encouraged by the friendly tones of his visitor. "Do you know of anybody that wants a boy?"

"Well, no, I can't say I do. It's pretty hard to find places at this time of year. But I'll go to the barn, I guess, and see if Higglesey's there."

There was a blunt honesty in the speech of this man that went straight to Jotham's heart. He thought how much he would like to work for such a man. But no, he must stay where he was, for this man had confirmed Mr. Higglesey's words that there were few who wanted to hire at this season.

"Well," he said to himself, "I must stay here, and do the best I can. I'll try to please, anyway. Jotham Wilson is not the boy to flinch. I'll show my father that I can do something."

As he said this, he straightened back and put his

hand in his pocket. Then he drew it out, and in it was the pearl-handled knife his grandmother gave him. He looked at it a moment, and the promise he made the giver recurred to him.

"I did promise my grandmother I'd try to be good," he mused. "I wonder what she thinks of me now. Of course Annette has written that I am gone. Well, grandfather and grandmother'll never think much of me again. There's no use in my going home. Everybody would look upon me with contempt. So I'll stay here and work."

When he went in to dinner, he found Mrs. Higglesey very busy. A pair of coarse gray pants lay beside her to which the shears had been freely applied. They had seen much service, but by turning, cutting away the seams, and some patching, Mrs. Higglesey said they would wear a long spell yet. Then there was a coat shortened to a jacket, and an old striped frock awaiting diminution.

Jotham looked at the garments and wondered how he would look when he should be arrayed in them; but he said not a word. He had resolved to make the best of everything, and "after all," he thought, "it matters not about my clothes. Nobody knows me here, and I

don't want they should know me. If I could only earn some money, I'd like it."

There was a dish of hot baked beans upon the table, and this constituted the dinner. Mrs. Higglesey's attention was fully occupied with her sewing, and dinner was of very slight importance. Jotham was fond of beans, and he ate freely; but he did wish he could have a piece of pie afterwards, such as his grandmother always had; but no pie was produced, and he was obliged to be contented without.

"You needn't say one word, Enoch Higglesey," said the woman after dinner. "I'm going to have this boy to help me, and that's a fact. If I can't have him, I won't work for him."

"Wall, wall, old woman, take your own way."

"I reckon I will. I'm going to have some butter out of that cream; so pull up the churn here, boy, and go at it. We'll give it one more try."

All the afternoon the boy sat there, churning, churning, as he did the day before. The hours seemed interminable, for Mrs. Higglesey scarcely spoke. She was hastening her work, for she saw that Jotham was injuring the clothes he was wearing, and her prudence suggested that they ought immediately to be hung away for church use. In her opinion, such clothes

ought never to be worn except on great occasions, such as Sunday services, funerals, or rare visits.

Jotham looked often at his hands as he churned, for many blisters puffed up in watery tenderness. Some of them broke; and, as the iron-crank chafed them, they reminded the sufferer of their presence continually. But in spite of all their exertions, regardless of execrations, and heedless of continued whirling, the cream refused to yield its buttery particles.

"I never did see anything so mean," Mrs. Higglesey said that night, in despair; though Jotham thought he had greater cause for complaint than she, for his arms were in such pain that he could hardly hold them still.

"I'll carry the cream to Marston, to-morrow," Mr. Higglesey said. "Don't you want to go up and buy something?"

"No; how do you think I can buy when my butter won't come, and my cream must go for half price? You get all you can out of Marston."

"Don't you worry about that, Betsey. I know how to manage him."

The next morning, when the four o'clock summons

awoke the weary workman, he found his new suit ready.

"It takes me to do things quick," Mrs. Higglesey said, as the boy presented himself in his new attire. "Now you look as though you could work. But I tell you, Enoch, he ought to have some stouter boots."

"I can't afford to buy boots," replied the man.

"Well, but you see you'll have to buy some by and by if you let him wear these; 'cause you see, he'll wear them out. Now I tell you, there's a pair of old boots upstairs that got kind of shrunk so you couldn't wear 'em; they'd be just right for him. They're under the eaves up there."

Mr. Higglesey ascended the back stairs and soon returned with some boots that struck terror into the mind of the expectant wearer. He had accepted the other garments without a murmur, but against these boots he ventured to remonstrate.

"I can't wear them; I'm sure I can't."

"Betsey, fetch the tallow," rejoined Mr. Higglesey. "I'll fix 'em so he can wear 'em. They're a little stiff now, that's all."

"But they are too large," interposed Jotham, distressed at the idea of wearing the huge, clumped things.

"That's all the better," returned the man, persistently warming the tallow; "they won't pinch your feet. There, now, see, when I rub on the tallow they grow soft. That's a good idee, Betsey, getting these down. They'll make a capital pair for barn-work. Put 'em on here, boy, and see how they work."

Jotham reluctantly drew off his nicely fitting shoes, and the farmer noticed his socks.

"Just look there, Betsey; his stockings are as fine as silk. What's the use in having such city fixin's on a farm? They won't last him a week. Haint you got some old, coarse ones of mine?"

"Yes, but they'd be too big. He couldn't wear 'em."

Then a sudden thought occurred to her, and she continued, —

"But I know what I can do. I can cut the tops off from some of mine. It takes me to plan, Enoch Higglesey. I don't know what you'd do without me."

Jotham's feet were soon equipped, notwithstanding his remonstrances. The worthy couple seemed to consider his wishes as the last thing to be consulted. Economy and expediency were the main issues. What cared they for the tastes of a boy! They were mere idle fantasies, too whimsical to be mentioned.

"There," said Mrs. Higglesey, with a shrug of satisfaction, "now you look complete. No, you're not quite fixed yet. That cap will just get spoiled if you wear it all the time, and there's an old fur one upstairs; 'twill make you warm as toast. I'll get it in a minute."

When she came back with the cap, she brought also a pair of mittens.

"There, now," she said, as the boy stood complete before her, "that's common sense. You look like work. There's no use in having these nice city clothes fan-dangling round; they're good for nothing. Good stout stuff is what we ought to wear."

In truth, Jotham presented a very comical picture as he stood there in his new dress. He seemed like a gem metamorphosed: a man's cowhide boots; coarse, gray pants; a striped, farmer's frock extending below the knees, broad across the shoulders, because that under it there was a spencer made by cutting off the skirts of a coat; a fur cap, too loose, into which the head plunged too far; and blue, striped mittens.

But under this cap there glistened a pair of bold, dark, intelligent eyes; and the handsome, oval face looked like beauty peering between jagged clouds.

The whiteness of the cheeks was not yet tanned by exposure, nor the expression tamed by long-continued subjection and labor. It was like changing the shell of a nut while the meat remained the same. No one could have known the boy without looking directly into his face; but a glance there showed that it was Jotham still. Notwithstanding his reversed situation, and in spite of the mortifications he had endured, there was a dauntless defiance in his eye which showed that the spirit within was neither willingly conquered, nor long to be kept in subjection.

He raised his feet slowly and walked out with the lantern in his hand. The weight of the boots prevented the light, elastic step which was his wont; but, as he passed out into the chill, morning air, he was compelled to admit that if his dress was not beautiful, it certainly was more comfortable; and he understood why the farmer had not complained of the cold when *he* had suffered so much. The wind could not penetrate through these garments, and that in a measure reconciled him to the change.

Mr. Higglesey lingered a moment in the house, and his wife expressed her satisfaction.

"I tell you, Enoch, we've done a good thing. It hasn't cost a single cent to fit him out, and the

suit we've saved will be good enough to wear to meeting all winter. But there's one thing I don't understand."

"What is it?"

"Why, I don't see how he came to be off out here alone. There's something queer about it. He don't belong to no poor family. He says these are his oldest clothes, and you see these are real good. And then his manners are so nice! How he bows and says 'thank you,' and how he always adds the 'sir' when he speaks to you! He must have a good father and mother, and I don't see how they came to send him out into the country at this time of year, in search of work, without a penny in his pocket."

"Wall, now, Betsey, I s'pose his father got a little common sense into him, and thought 'twas about time the boy earned his own living. He didn't want him cooped up to die in the great city; he thought 'twould be better to send him into the country and let him hunt for himself. Showed his father wan't a fool."

"But why didn't he give him some money?" continued Mrs. Higglesey with a woman's curiosity.

"Oh, maybe he did. Likely as not the boy has spent it. You can't tell."

"No, I can't tell," she continued; "but it seems queer. I'll quiz him some day, I know."

Mrs. Higglesey went to her household operations quite contented with the result of her sagacity concerning the clothes, but not so well pleased respecting her cream. She was fretful over that as she poured it from the churn into the jar, and kicked the cat who came to eat the droppings. Nor was she very sweet-tempered at the breakfast table. The loss of two or three dollars on her butter was not to be patiently endured, and, by way of compensation, she spoiled her face with a frown, and spoke sharply to her husband. He regarded her little, or answered her in her own style, eating quietly, as though used to domestic storms. But to Jotham her manners were very unpleasant.

"I do wish she was like my grandmother," he thought. "Grandmother's men sit down at the table with her, and she is so smiling and pleasant that she makes them all happy."

But as he saw that Mr. Higglesey was regardless of her petulance, he was less annoyed than he would otherwise have been. The strange dress

which he had been compelled to assume so disfigured him that he could hardly recognize himself at the table. The loose frock sleeve dipped into the coffee, the frock itself floundered out on to his plate, and his feet seemed pinned to the floor by the heavy boots. He found, too, that he must eat very fast. Mr. Higglesey could never spare time for ceremonies at the table. "Help yourself and get done," was his motto; and unless Jotham made equal haste, he found Mrs. Higglesey clearing the dishes and food from before his eyes.

"I can never bear to see a table standing round all day," she muttered, as Jotham lingered to finish his coffee. "It's just a sign of laziness," and the boy understood that henceforth he was expected to leave the table at the same time with his master.

"I'm going up town," said Mr. Higglesey, when they were once more at the barn. "You may curry and harness Billy into the single wagon. I'm going to engage my turkeys. It'll be Thanksgiving pretty soon, and they'll sell best then. You must feed 'em up well to-day. The fatter they git, the more they'll bring. Mix up some meal for the oxen, take good care of the cows, feed the sheep, clear

the stables, look after the eggs, give Tom a good dressing, shell out some corn so as to have it ready, feed the pigs, turn the cattle out to water, give the hens some more corn, pull down hay to have it ready for night, get in the woman's wood and water, and then go down cellar and pick over some apples that need it. Betsey'll show you where they are."

Jotham listened in astonishment. How was he to accomplish all those things in that brief time? — for Mr. Higglesey said he should be back before noon. The clearing of the stables alone seemed to him more than he could do; yet there was no alternative, and what must be done might as well be done well. He determined to try and please, hoping he should fare better by and by. He was busily engaged at his work, when footsteps arrested his attention, and glancing around he saw a boy of his own age.

The boy walked through the barn in an indifferent manner, examining boxes, rakes, and hay at his leisure, and scanning Jotham with a curious eye. Jotham watched him but said nothing. The boy looked at him with a wondering smile. Jotham knew that, from his big boots to his fur cap, every-

thing was passing under investigation, and a crimson flush overspread his face. He did not want to speak, and finally turned away, that his features might not be seen. At length the boy drew near and spoke, —

“Holloa!”

Jotham replied with the same expression.

“Are you Higglesey’s new boy?” continued the stranger.

“I suppose so. I’m going to work for him.”

“Well, so father said. He said he saw you here, but, by Jimminy, he described a different fellow from you.”

Jotham blushed. He was deeply mortified, for he knew that the strange boy was amusing himself at his expense. He did not reply for some moments; then he asked, —

“Was it your father I saw here yesterday?”

“I expect it was. He said he saw a plaguy pretty fellow at work here, dressed nice enough to go to meeting, and he guessed you’d have a hard time with old Higglesey. But, Jupiter! you look as though you was a match for the old fellow himself. Where did you get your clothes?”

Jotham was displeased, and answered, pertly, —

"Is that any of your business?"

"Why, no, it's none of my business, only you don't look a bit as father described."

"What if I don't? Tell your father to teach his son better manners."

"Oh, you're smart!" replied the boy, a little surprised at Jotham's bold reply. He thought a boy in that garb could be insulted with impunity, but he found that beneath that shaggy cap there was an eye that could flash and a mouth that could speak for itself.

"Don't be offended," he rejoined, after a moment. "I came down on purpose to see you. My name is Dan Trencher. What is your name?"

"Jotham Wilson."

"Well, we know each other now. Say, how do you like Ma'am Higglesey?"

"Mrs. Higglesey, do you mean?" replied Jotham. "I like her very well."

"Pshaw, now," responded the boy. "I know you don't! There never was a man or boy that lived here that liked her. I guess you didn't know 'em or you wouldn't have come. You'll git enough of it before winter's over, I'll warrant."

At that moment the voice of Mrs. Higglesey was heard, calling, —

“Come, Jotham, hurry round! The water’s waiting to scald the meal. Don’t be all day coming.”

Jotham started for the house, and Dan ran off, laughing.

“Ha, ha, ha! That’s the way you’ll have to take it. I’m glad I aint in your shoes—no—boots, I mean. Jimminy! They’re big enough for you and me,” and the boy gave the boots a look of laughing scorn.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOTHAM'S THANKSGIVING.



DAN TRENCHER burst into the kitchen of his own home with a loud laugh, and, as he saw his father, he paused and spoke, —

“Well, father, that’s a funny looking fellow you sent me down to see! You said he looked like a first-rate fellow, and was dressed like a gentleman.”

“So he was,” replied Mr. Trencher. “He sat there watching the fires, and I thought to myself, ‘Higglesey’s got a new fellow to operate on. A smart one too.’ I declare I pity any boy that gets in there.”

“But, father, he can’t be anything or he wouldn’t be rigged out in old Higglesey’s clothes;” and then the boy laughed again at the recollection of the ludicrous spectacle Jotham presented.

“Why, you see, father,” he continued, “he had on that old fur cap that Higglesey has worn these twenty years.”

"Twenty years!" interposed Mr. Trencher. "Not quite so long as that, I guess."

"Yes, it is! I heard Higglesey say so last winter. Well, he had on that cap and a frock cut down, and such a pair of boots! Oh my! Such boots! You ought to see them. Why, there's seventeen patches on them, they are wrinkled and turned up at the toes, and the soles look as though they had been scorched through."

Again the boy laughed, and his mother replied to him, —

"Probably he's some poor, homeless boy, whom Mr. Higglesey gets for a trifle. You know he'd never pay anything if he could avoid it."

"He didn't act nor look like a poor boy when I saw him," replied Mr. Trencher. "He spoke like a gentleman."

"He spoke well enough to me," returned Dan, "and he's got a good face. But he must be a sappy, or he wouldn't wear old Higglesey's clothes. He got a little mad with me because I laughed."

"Well, you shouldn't laugh at him," observed Mrs. Trencher. "Probably he's some poor boy."

That afternoon Mrs. Trencher called to see her neighbor, and as they sat together, knitting, they

rehearsed to each other the events of the last few days. Mrs. Higglesey gave a full account of her trials in churning, and Mrs. Trencher described her superhuman efforts in house-cleaning, preparing for Thanksgiving, and entertaining company. The two women when together, habitually related to each other all their domestic matters, although when separated, Mrs. Trencher declared Mrs. Higglesey was the closest, meanest woman she ever saw, and Mrs. Higglesey always insisted that Mrs. Trencher was the greatest brag the world afforded. ,

"She's always telling what she does," Mrs Higglesey would say. "It's a pity she couldn't see what *I* have to do!"

But Mrs. Trencher had an advantage over her neighbor in this particular, for she had children, and Mrs. Higglesey had none. Therefore Mrs. Trencher would never for a moment admit that Mrs. Higglesey's labors could equal hers, at which Mrs. Higglesey, desirous of being considered the greatest worker of the neighborhood, was exceedingly tried, and it was with secret satisfaction that she boasted this day of her labors for Jotham.

"I declare!" she remarked, her large, brown face expressing complacency, "top of my churning, I

had to go and make a suit for our new boy to work in. He came here with just nothing at all but the clothes he had on, and I fixed him out from top to toe."

A smile lurked in Mrs. Trencher's eye as she thought of the description Dan had given her of this suit, but ere she had time to reply, Jotham came in. He started as he saw a strange woman, and, as he noticed her quick glance taking an inventory of his apparel, his face flushed. He was cold, and had come in hastily, but Mrs. Trencher could not fail of observing what her husband and son had remarked, that he was not an ordinary boy. She noticed that every word he uttered was expressed with grammatical accuracy, and when she went home, she declared that it was strange he should be there.

"He must have a strange father," she said. "No father, who cared for his son, would let him go there to work. But then, to be sure, his father don't know what kind of a place it is, probably, for Mr. Higglesey picked him up in the street."

"Well," responded Mr. Trencher, buttoning his coat to go out, "he'll have to work some if he stays there."

"I reckon he will," replied she. "I'll warrant he

did all that churning she tells about. I know her. She wants to make out that she does as much as I."

"Well, well," laughed Mr. Trencher, "you women are like honey when you are together, and vinegar when your backs are turned."

"That is just what the men are," retorted Mrs. Trencher. "You'll talk about Higglesey all day, and then go right down to see him at night, as though he was your brother."

Mr. Trencher laughed and went out, and his wife, watching, saw that he went to the very house from which she had just come.

"Talk about women!" she uttered, scornfully. "They are no worse than the men, and I can prove it."

As the days passed along, Jotham found that his duties increased. Numerous as they were at first, they grew in numbers every day. If Mr. Higglesey failed of keeping him busy, Mrs. Higglesey always had a fund in reserve. Her capacity for inventing work was exhaustless. At a moment's notice she could produce half a dozen different directions in which the boy was needed at once. When work outside failed, there was plenty in the house, and one day, when Dan Trencher came in suddenly, he saw Jotham

standing beside the kitchen table, with his frock laid one side, his shirt sleeves rolled above his elbow, a large pan before him containing a colander, through which he was vigorously rubbing a quantity of stewed pumpkin.

Dan took a seat by the stove and watched the operation. Poor Jotham blushed, and would have crawled through any aperture to escape those fun-loving, eager eyes, and Dan, fully conscious of the effect he was producing, never once ceased looking, till Jotham turned his back fully toward him. Mrs. Higglesey was bustling about with great ostentation, her heavy steps jarring the kitchen floor as she passed from the stove to the table, thence to the pantry and back again.

"I've had so much to do," she remarked, apologetically, to Dan, as though he were a woman, "I haint got near ready for Thanksgiving, though it comes day after to-morrow. I s'pose your mother's got e'enamost done her fixin'."

"Don't know," answered Dan, carelessly, "I don't go into women's matters."

Jotham's hands rubbed the faster at this sly thrust which he understood as aimed at himself. His nature longed to reply, and to fling itself back upon the boy

who dared to taunt his misfortunes; but Mrs. Higglesey was watching, and he continued silently at his work. The woman, however, was a little piqued, and she retorted, —

“Well, ’twouldn’t hurt you to know something about your mother’s work. Laziness is no good.”

“Who wants to wear out with work?” asked Dan, a smile drawing down the corners of his mouth.

“It’s better to wear out than to rust out,” returned the woman, emphatically, bringing down the roller with which she was preparing her pastry.

“Pshaw! no!” answered Dan. “You can’t mend an old, worn-out thing, but you *can* scour off a little rust any time, and it will be as good as new.”

“I never knew laziness come to anything,” responded the woman. “I want no lazy folks about me. — Rub that a little harder, Jotham. Get all through that you can. — Have you sold your turkeys, Dan?”

“I believe so,” answered Dan, carelessly, feigning ignorance purposely to excite Mrs. Higglesey.

“You believe so!” she answered. “Don’t you know? What’ll you be good for when you grow up without you learn something now?”

“I’ll be good to swallow bread and butter,” rejoined the boy.

"Yes, I'll warrant you are good at that, now. Boys always are. — Here, Jotham, if you've finished that pumpkin, put the leavings in the swill, and bring the chopping-tray here. I've got to have some apples chopped, and you may as well help."

"I ought to feed the cows," replied Jotham. "Mr. Higglesey left directions."

"Well, be sry, I must have you back here soon."

These few words of Jotham contrasted strangely with the language of his mistress. Her broad vowels and harsh consonants were little like the smooth accents and polished utterance of the well-bred school-boy. Dan marked the difference, and, in spite of Jotham's humiliating situation and coarse dress, he respected him. He could not fail of perceiving the handsome forehead, the intelligent countenance, and evident superiority of the boy whom he had been ridiculing, and when Jotham spoke with so much propriety to Mrs. Higglesey, Dan forgot the boots in the new respect he suddenly conceived for the young workman.

"He's no sappy, after all," was his inward exclamation, as he took his cap and followed Jotham to the barn.

"I'm glad that torment's gone!" exclaimed Mrs.

Higglesey, when Dan had closed the door. "He needn't pretend he doesn't know about his mother's work. He does know, and I know he was watching to see how much shortening I put in my pie-crust, so he might tell her of it. Well, I don't care, I won't put all my lard into my pies when it's selling for twenty-five cents a pound, and that's a fact. There's no need of having pie-crust break off at a touch."

When Jotham returned, Dan came with him. Boys were scarce in that vicinity, and Dan really longed for a new companion. Anything was better than nothing, he thought, and he was determined to be friendly with this new boy, even though he was obliged to take him in the cast-off clothing of "old Higglesey."

But as he became acquainted with Jotham he ceased to think of the old clothes, and involuntarily yielded that respect to him which inferiority ever gives to those more advanced. At the barn they had talked quite freely, and Dan was compelled to admit that Jotham was no "sappy." There was nothing he could mention in connection with boys' plays of which Jotham was ignorant. Indeed, he soon found himself a learner. Jotham could name things of which he had never heard, and he began to feel that standing in old, wrinkled boots, though twice too large, was no in-

jury to the head. He followed the working-boy from place to place in the barn, and not an insult escaped his lips.

"I should be dreadful lonely here," he remarked, as they were going back into the house.

Jotham did not reply, but hastened into the kitchen, where the presence of Mrs. Higglesey prevented further conversation. Here Jotham chopped and chopped the apple destined for the mince pies, while Dan sat by with his feet on the stove-hearth, wondering how many teeth would be broken by eating Mrs. Higglesey's pastry. He laughingly said this to his mother when he went home, declaring that Mrs. Higglesey used just one thimbleful of shortening to every ten pies.

"Tight old thing!" he said, "I know I'd run away before I'd work for her."

"I don't believe she works so terrible hard," responded Mrs. Trencher. "I do more in a week than she'd do in a fortnight. What's that suit of clothes she made for the new boy? Only old clothes cut off. Anybody could fix them in half an hour. But there, I oughtn't to talk about my neighbors."

Dan was accustomed to this expression. From his earliest youth he had heard it. When visitors were at

the house, and his mother had retailed her budget of gossip, she invariably added, "But there, I oughtn't to talk about my neighbors;" and Dan considered the sentence as a species of expiatory utterance by which his mother cancelled her sin of scandal. He supposed it quite right to tear an inoffensive person to tatters, if only at the end this sentence was added.

Mrs. Higglesey was glad when Dan was gone. She immediately despatched Jotham in various directions for necessary articles, at intervals sending him to the barn, thus by her prudent and thorough care, keeping everything in order during the absence of her husband who had gone with a load of the finest turkeys the neighborhood could produce.

Mr. Higglesey returned with an empty wagon but a full pocket.

"There's no mistake about our turkeys," he said to his wife, clapping his hands on his full pocket-book. "They were solid fellows, I tell ye. I got five dollars more than I expected."

The woman's eyes glittered with delight, and, as Mr. Higglesey and Jotham sat down to dinner, she actually placed one of her Thanksgiving pies upon the table. It was hot, and though not rich, yet to the hungry boy it was more delicious than anything he had

eaten since he had been there ; and he secretly wished Mr. Higglesey could make five dollars every day, if it would so expand her heart.

The killing and dressing of the turkeys had been a long and tedious task, and, as soon as dinner was over, they prepared for another equally great. Seventy-five chickens were brought into the kitchen, not all at once, but rapidly as they could be disposed of. Every moment until late in the evening they worked, scarcely giving time for the usual duties of the farm, and at four the next morning they began again. Before noon Mr. Higglesey was gone with another load, and his wife was quite good-natured, as she usually was when money was coming in.

At last Thanksgiving dawned slowly upon the expectant families. Tardily the portals of dawn opened ; for clouds cold and gray overspread the heavens, and the gates of the east did not unfold to admit the rosy streaks of early light. The chariot of the sun mounted the sky behind a draperied curtain, and day therefore came in heavily and dull. Jotham missed the four o'clock rap, but he noted its absence with gladness. It was a luxury to lie quietly and rest. He did not sleep, but closed his eyes in a half doze, and busy thoughts occupied him.

Home and its familiar scenes came to him. He remembered how often he and Annette had planned for Thanksgiving; how they had hoped that grandfather and grandmother would come to them this year; and he wondered whether they would come. Would they all be there together? He could almost see his grandfather, so jolly and kind, and grandmother, so loving and gentle. What would they think of him, the truant? He would be ashamed ever to see them again. In the midst of this reverie gray dawn forced her way slowly through the window, and the summons came from the foot of the stairs. The boy jumped from the bed, and there was no more time for thought.

"Fly round!" said Mr. Higglesey, as Jotham entered the kitchen. "We've laid abed just a leetle too late. We'll have to work fast. Take the pails out with you. We'll do the milking up in a hurry."

The routine of the morning work had become familiar to the incipient farmer, and he went through it with a rapidity that surprised Mr. Higglesey.

"You'll make a workman yet," he said, as he came around where Jotham was pulling down hay with rapid strokes. "Your father'll be proud of you."

Something like a shiver ran through the boy's

frame at this remark, and he thought, if Mr. Higglesey only knew the circumstances, how differently he would think! But he said nothing. He dared not tell that he had run away from a good home, lest the old farmer should send him back again, and he could not go back. He could not meet the censures that would fall upon him at home, nor the contempt of his acquaintances, who he knew would despise him.

"We'll go to church to-day," continued Mr. Higglesey. "The woman, she never goes Thanksgiving day, 'cause there's so many fixin's to do. So fly round, and you may drive Tom. Should you like to drive?"

"Yes, indeed, I should," answered Jotham, his eyes brightening. It was the first real pleasure that had come to him since he left his home.

How he rubbed Tom that morning! Every hair on his body was smoothed into place, and the best harness was made ready to put upon him. Then he went in and saw that it was Thanksgiving indeed. Fried chicken was smoking upon the table, with toast and pies. Besides, there was a white damask cloth whose iron folds glistened just as his mother's used to glisten at home. Tears almost came into his eyes,

—tears of regret for the home now lost, and of joy at the sight of so nice a breakfast here. But if the table was changed, Mrs. Higglesey was not. She had become disturbed by her unusual preparations for breakfast, and was very irritable. If she gave thanks by preparing nice food, she certainly had not prepared her heart for an acceptable offering.

“I’ve been waiting this half hour,” was her salutation when they entered the room. “Everything is stone cold. Didn’t you hear me call you?”

“Wall, we couldn’t come any sooner,” replied Mr. Higglesey, going to the tea-kettle with a wash-basin in his hands.

“That’s a likely story,” replied the woman. “Two of you couldn’t get through out there, and I here all alone have done all this. What would you do if you was in my place? I reckon you’d have to step quick. But men never do know how much a woman does. I don’t know where you’d be, Enoch Higglesey, if ’twasn’t for me.”

“There’s plenty of others,” replied Mr. Higglesey, as he and Jotham wiped their hands upon the same towel.

Mrs. Higglesey’s old eyes snapped, but she did not reply. Notwithstanding her scolding, she had

been busily engaged in placing the chairs and getting her coffee, which was real coffee this morning, instead of barley, as usual.

The breakfast seemed delicious to Jotham, and, contrary to Mrs. Higglesey's custom, she pressed him to eat. She did not watch his plate lest he should get upon it one mouthful too much; but she actually loaded it with good things.

"We're going to meetin'," said Mr. Higglesey, as they rose from the table. "I s'pose you can git along alone, Betsey."

"I s'pose I generally have to," she answered, roughly. "As I said before, I don't know what you'd do without me to take care of things here."

"And, as I said before, there are plenty of others," replied the man, curtly.

"You needn't tell me that again, Enoch Higglesey. There's precious few that do as I do;" and with a broad sweep she passed around the table to gather up the dishes, in doing which a cup fell from her hand to the floor.

"As ill luck would have it," she muttered, looking down at the fragments. "There's so much gone now."

"It's your own fault," replied Mr. Higglesey. "You was too cross to keep straight."

"Well, I reckon I shall be crosser before I'm better," she answered.

Jotham hoped in his heart that he should be out of the way if she grew any more irritated, and he hastily went out.

"Now," said Mr. Higglesey, "hurry up. We've no time to lose. We must git in so as to put on our tother clothes."

Jotham's heavy boots clumped about with hasty steps, for he was anxious to show Mr. Higglesey how well he could drive Tom, and besides, he was sure it would be a luxury to put on his own clothes once more. Never was work accomplished sooner, and before it was time to go, the ardent boy was dressed and waiting. Then Tom came out, holding up his head, and dancing in high glee.

"You're the fellow for me," said Jotham, rubbing his glossy side. "We'll have a gay old time to-day, that we will."

The boy was in high spirits. His own clothes had partially restored him to himself, and a horse always excited his imagination, carrying him away on vision-

ary wings. He drove skilfully, and Mr. Higglesey was quite delighted.

"You're a smarter boy than I thought," he said. "I guess I must keep you."

Several men were before the church-door when Jotham came up with a manly step. He had become so elated by driving and curbing Tom that he had almost forgotten the cloud that rested over him, and went into church with his natural gait. His head was erect, his brown hair thrown carelessly back from his white forehead, his cheeks were flushed with animation, and many inquiring eyes were turned toward him.

He had noticed Dan Trencher on the steps as he passed, and tipped his hat. Dan stared in surprise.

"What kind of a boy can this be?" he asked himself. "My! Jimminy! What a bow that was! And what a step he has! I should think he was a gentleman. How can he wear those old clothes, and look so like a clown?"

Dan puzzled his head during church-service over this strange acquaintance; and many honest farmers' boys and girls wondered what handsome boy Mr. Higglesey had in his pew. Jotham was quite happy; and yet he was not happy, for all the time his

thoughts were reverting to his own church at home. When he saw the smiling faces of the young girls, he was reminded of Annette, and guilty shame oppressed him. He wished himself back by her side, wished he could look in her clear eyes, and hear her say, "I forgive you."

When he reached home again, dinner was waiting. Mrs. Higglesey had done her best, and the food was so different from their ordinary coarse fare, that the boy secretly wished Thanksgiving might last through the year. But when dinner was over, work came back.

"Take off your nice clothes," said Mr. Higglesey. "It just spoils good clothes to wear them at home."

Jotham obeyed reluctantly. He dreaded going back to that coarse suit. He seemed not like himself in such apparel; but there was no alternative. Mr. Higglesey had a stern manner not easily resisted. The day ended with work, but something of the brief happiness lingered within him. He remembered the church-service, and that one hour of respite from dull toil was like a ray of sunshine amidst clouds.

CHAPTER IX.

CHOPPING AND ITS EFFECTS.



IN Mr. Higglesey's family, Thanksgiving carried none of its relaxation into the following days.

Jotham hoped for a little reprieve, but he found only renewed rigor. New kinds of work seemed to be invented. Tools were to be repaired and laid away for the summer; stones were to be piled up in the fields before the coming of snow. A few fields were ploughed, and Jotham walked beside the oxen in his frock and heavy boots, back and forth over the long furrows, till he was weary and ready to faint.

"I wish snow would come," he said to Dan, in one of their private talks.

"So do I," replied Dan. "I want to skate and go sleigh-riding."

"And I want to rest," replied Jotham. "If snow would come 'twould stop all this out-door work."

"Not much will you rest though," answered Dan. "I tell you, I never knew Higglesey let a fellow rest."

"But what can we do after snow comes? The barn doesn't take all day."

"Well, I'll tell you. You'll have to cut wood down over the hill there; real tough trees they are; scrub oak and chestnut. Your arms will ache, or my name's not Dan Trencher."

"Cut trees!" repeated Jotham. "I don't believe I can."

"You'll have to try as quick as the snow comes, I can tell you," returned Dan.

Jotham longed no more for the snow. He was sure that cutting trees would be harder than pumping water, or chopping pumpkins, or even milking, which was his terror. He remembered how, like Dan, he had delighted in snow. He could think of the snowmen he had made, of the snowballs, of the coasting, and skating; but now it was only work, work. When he went out one morning and found the earth draped in her mantle of white, instead of running about to make tracks, he walked solemnly along, thinking only of the trees to be cut, and of his own weariness. Before breakfast was over, he found the truth of Dan's prediction.

"Betsey," said Mr. Higglesey, "put some victuals into a tin pail. We are going down to the woods, and we'll want a little dinner. You can give the cows their noon fodderin."

"I reckon I can," she answered; "I've done it this many a year."

"Got some doughnuts?" asked the man.

"No, I haint. You're always after doughnuts, and it costs as much to make 'em as it costs to make cake. I can't afford it."

"Wall, what can we carry?"

"Why, there's some cold baked beans."

"Wall, what else?"

"There's bread and cheese."

"Wall, haint you got a mince pie?"

"Oh, I can't spare one of them. I put 'em away after Thanksgiving, and they've got to last all winter. There's your sister Sally, she'll be here some day; and cousin John's folks, and, like as not, the minister; he always does come every winter, and 'twon't do to be out of pies."

"Wall, wall," said the man, "give us something. Anything'll do. Come, Jotham, let's go to the barn and finish up."

If Jotham had not been tired with unceasing work,

the woods would have seemed to him romantic that day. The light snow rested on the boughs, festooning them with fantastic wreaths; the birds, who had sheltered themselves beneath the branches, started at the sound of human footsteps, and tiny tracks betrayed the course of some small animal who had crossed the snow in pursuit of his morning meal. True it was cold, but, notwithstanding, there was a wild-wood beauty charming to the unaccustomed boy.

But Mr. Higglesey saw no rural beauties. He examined the trees with a view to their utility, remarked that this one was old and might as well be cut down; that one was in the way of others and hindered their growth; there was a pile of brush that had lain all summer, and here was some undergrowth must be cleared out. All this time Jotham was looking up at the interlacing branches of the tall oaks, or comparing together the various kinds of small trees. In one place a small pine had sprung up; in another, a spruce; but, chiefly, he saw they were oaks and chestnuts, those lovers of our northern soil.

Into one of these, tough and gnarly, Mr. Higglesey struck his axe, commanding Jotham to do the same. They stood on opposite sides of the tree, and tried to strike their blows in even strokes; but Jotham was

irregular. His arms were not muscular and strong. He could not send forward his axe with a blow that would sink into the living tree.

"Sink your axe deeper," said Mr. Higglesey; and Jotham tried, but in vain. He had not sufficient strength.

"Wall, wall," exclaimed Mr. Higglesey, trying to be patient, "you'll learn after a while. Can't expect a green hand to know everything at first. Come, we'll change sides."

Jotham soon grew very tired. His limbs ached, his heart beat fast, the blood rushed to his head, his arms seemed scarcely able to wield the axe; but there was no pause. No sooner had the great tree fallen staggeringly to the ground, than Mr. Higglesey ordered an attack upon its limbs. Beautiful branches, upon which nature had lavished her most artistic fancies, were lopped by the shining steel, and their tender branchlets were strewed upon the ground, to mingle once more with the elements from which they were made.

Jotham proved more efficient in this part of the labor. He could sever the small limbs, and soon quite a pile lay on the snow before him.

"That's right," said Mr. Higglesey, glancing at

him. "You'll make a chopper. Of course you'll get tired. There's no use in minding that. It's the natural effect. You'll toughen."

"It appears to me I'll die in toughening," said Jotham, growing desperate and venturing to speak.

"Pshaw! No, you won't. All boys think so. Keep at it. You'll come out right yet."

When noon came they sat down on a log and ate their cold baked beans, with the brown bread and cheese. Chopping made good appetites, and the coarse fare disappeared with rapidity. Then the axes were resumed and the work proceeded. Jotham thought of the fairy stories he had read, and he wished some dear little "brownie" would come with a golden axe that would cut all the trees at once. Several times a slight rustling in the branches caused him to look earnestly, almost hoping some bright little face would be seen, bringing magical aid. But then, suddenly recollecting that fairies only helped good boys and girls, he resumed his work in despair, feeling that no fairy would ever come to him, except to reprove.

That night he had a new dish for supper. He had often read of it as very common in olden times, but now he found that bean-porridge was Mr. Higgle-

sey's usual supper on his return from the woods. As Jotham was eating it, he could not help repeating to himself, —

“Bean-porridge hot, bean-porridge cold,
Bean-porridge best when it's nine days old.”

“Well,” said he to himself, “it is hot, and it tastes good. I'll eat it and go to bed. I was never so tired in my life.”

He did not wait to see Mr. Higglesey hold his pipe in the oven-mouth, but went to his bed the moment the work was finished. He had never been allowed a light since the first night he was there, so there was no inducement to sit in his chamber. He hastened into bed, but not to sleep. How could he sleep when every limb was in pain? Over and over he turned, but still the pain racked him, till he groaned from actual misery.

Then he thought of his mother. He remembered how tenderly she had bathed his head when some slight cold had caused a trifling illness at home. He thought of Annette's careful watching, and of his grandmother's judicious care. But now no one asked, “Are you tired? Are you ill?” No voice of love cheered him amid his sufferings. When at last he fell asleep, he scarcely rested. Fevered

throbs rushed through his system and his brain seemed burning.

At four o'clock came that thundering rap.

"Oh, dear!" groaned the boy, turning in agony. "Why can't that old man keep still sometimes?" What is he made of? Can he work forever and ever?"

With temples burning, eyes aching, and stiffened limbs, he arose. When he descended the stairs, he stumbled, and came down into the kitchen with the gait of one stiff with rheumatism.

"Hurry up!" said Mr. Higglesey. "Hurry up! We must git into the woods early this morning. Pump up the water the first thing, then do the milking. I'll be feeding the cattle."

As the work went on, the boy's weariness gradually decreased. His energies roused and the stiffness of his limbs relaxed, for the morning's pumping always threw the perspiration upon his brow; nor was he much relieved by the milking.

Three days he followed this course: In the woods all day, and hastening the morning and evening duties at home. The third night found him in despair. He lay on his bed and wept in misery, longing for a friend, for one loving heart

to bestow its sympathy, for just one to whom he could look for protection and help.

"I will go home," he said to himself. "Yes, I will go home. Surely they will take me back again. But oh, I can't go home to-night! Oh, how my head aches! Is there no one to whom I can look?"

Some little remembrance came to him, some thought of the past, and a voice from the echoes of his heart whispered a verse he once learned to repeat in Sabbath school: "Call upon the Lord while he is near." But he quickly thrust the thought one side, murmuring,—

"No, no, it is not for me to call upon God. I am too wicked. He would not hear me. No, no, I cannot pray. I broke my promise to my grandmother. I told her I would try to pray; but I broke my promise. Oh, dear! I am so tired I cannot lie still. And I am so cold! But my head is on fire! And it aches so! Oh, dear! What shall I do? If the Lord would hear me I would pray; for what else can I do?"

The boy was really too ill to sleep that night. Standing on the cold snow in the woods, and chopping vigorously all day, had produced a fever in

his delicately reared system. All night he tossed and thought. It seemed to him that one touch of his mother's hand upon his brow would soothe him to sleep, and many times he said, "I will go home. Yes, I will go home."

Promptly as the clock struck four, Mr. Higglesey was upon his feet, and his first movement was to thump ponderously on the chamber-door. Jotham raised his head, but such a terrible pain came in it, such a snapping, that he thought the very bones were cracking, and he dropped again upon the pillow. Then a shiver crawled through his bones, and a deathly sickness pervaded his central being.

"Get up, here," called Mr. Higglesey, directly, thrusting his head half way up the stairs. "Get up, I say."

Again Jotham raised his head, but it fell back as though struck by unseen hands, and he thought some terrible crash was the result. He answered with a groan.

"Why don't you wake up?" called Mr. Higglesey, ascending another stair.

"Oh, I can't get up!" answered the boy. "I can't. My head is bursting right off."

"Pshaw! You'll feel better after a minute. Come down and stir round a little."

"I can't, Mr. Higglesey; I can't lift my head."

"Oh, fudge! Come down. Betsey'll make you a cup of sage tea."

Once more he raised his head, but it fell back, and pressing his hands tightly upon his forehead, he answered, —

"I can't come, — I would if I could. I'm dying. Oh, dear! my head is worse and worse."

Mrs. Higglesey heard this colloquy, and it struck her woman's heart. Much as the beautiful had been driven from her soul by the love of money, there was yet left a little tenderness. The tones of an invalid always called her nature into sympathy with the sufferer. She was not in favor of doctors, for they were expensive; but her garret was full of roots and herbs, and she could steam, poultice, and blister with as much sagacity as the most practised nurse. Indeed, she was very proud of her skill in the healing art, and never lost an opportunity of displaying it. She called to Mr. Higglesey now, —

"Let the boy alone. It's likely he has taken cold. I'll fetch him out of it by and by."

The farmer descended the stairs, and went out

alone. But his work proceeded slowly. He missed the quick steps and ready assistance of his young workman, and he began to wonder how he ever accomplished so many things alone. When he came in to breakfast, his first question was for Jotham.

“What! aint he up yet?”

“No, he aint,” answered the woman; “and more’n that, he won’t be to-day. He’s got a fever upon him; I can tell.”

“Pshaw!” responded the man. “It’s only a boy’s fever, I reckon. He don’t want to work, that’s all. I saw yesterday that he lagged a little. Get him down to breakfast, and he’ll do well enough.”

“Now I tell you, Enoch Higglesey, I’ve seen sick people before now. There’s Mrs. Trencher, much as she brags, always sends for me when her boys are sick; and Aunt Mary Minot sent clear down from the village after me, ’cause she wouldn’t have a doctor.”

“Wall, what of it?”

“What of it, Enoch Higglesey? Why, it shows that I know, and I tell you the boy is feverish; and as long as I am Betsey Higglesey, whatever else people say of me, they shall never say I neglected the sick. I shall give him a sweat.”

Mr. Higglesey saw that there would be no change in her decision, and he quietly submitted, remarking, —

“Women always will have their own way.”

The morning was cloudy, and daylight revealed a few flakes of snow, foretelling a storm. This helped to pacify the farmer’s feelings, for he saw that, if Jotham was well, the weather would be unsuitable for chopping. His fertile invention immediately suggested another way of using the day profitably.

“I’ll jest carry up a load of potatoes to Marston,” he mused. “Maybe the price’ll fall by and by, and the sooner I carry them the better. But I declare, I wish the boy was well enough to help load ’em. I’m tired now. That pumping e’enamost broke my arms. I haint pumped a mite before since the boy has been here.”

Mrs. Higglesey paid little heed to her husband that morning. She was in her desired element, and the stove was soon covered with hot bricks and bowls of herb tea. Mustard poultices were prepared for the feet, the bricks were steamed with vinegar, and every preparation was made for a thorough sweating of the invalid. Her manners lost their roughness. Her house-work even became secondary. When she came

into the low chamber, she spoke tenderly as a mother to her son. Jotham looked up at her in surprise. Her kind words fell upon his ear with a soothing sound.

"Does your head ache just as much as it did, Jotham?" she asked, bending over him.

"Oh, yes, ma'am! it aches more and more."

"Poor boy!" she responded, touching his forehead with her hand.

Her palm was broad and rough with much labor, but she touched the brow so lightly that it gave the sufferer an exquisite pleasure. It seemed like his mother's hand.

"Poor boy!" she repeated. "How hot your head is! I'll bathe it with cold water."

But the cold water produced little effect. The fevered head absorbed it and ached still.

"I must draw the heat downward," said the woman. "I must give you a powerful sweat."

Then came the steamed bricks and the hot drinks. All day her care of him was unremitting; but the fever was obstinate. The unceasing toil of the past weeks, and the secret anxiety which had preyed upon him, had exhausted his system of its vital energies, and it was very difficult for him to rally. But in

proportion as the fever defied the nurse, her energies roused to meet it, and she racked her brain for remedies. Mr. Higglesey sold his potatoes, and returned with the money in his purse.

"So the boy don't get well?" he asked, as he came in and saw the array of bowls and cups on the stove and table.

"Speak lower, Enoch, do. Your voice goes right upstairs, and it'll rack his head worse'n 'tis now."

"Wall, wall," returned the man, softly, "cure him if you can. I don't want the neighbors to say I've killed another boy."

He went out with careful steps, remembering many summers ago, in the briskness of the haying season, when a fair-haired youth sickened and died at his house, and his neighbors accused him of overworking the child.

"No, no," he said to himself, as he went to the barn, "I'll not say a word to Betsey. Let her take her own way."

All night Mrs. Higglesey continued with her patient. She watched for the hours of fever, and she watched for the chills, combating each as it came, determined not to relax her efforts till sleep should quiet the distracted boy. But the clock struck four ere slumber

closed his lids, and this was the hour of her husband's rising. She heard his steps in the kitchen, and went down.

"Now, Enoch Higglesey, don't you make a breath of noise. The boy's asleep, and I'm going to sleep a little myself. It's no matter about breakfast. I'll put the coffee-pot on the stove, and you can git yourself something. This house must be still."

Mr. Higglesey went out, and the wearied nurse, going into her room, dropped upon the bed, leaving the doors open between herself and patient, that she might hear the first sound.

"I guess I'll break up the fever," she said to herself. "As Enoch says, 'twould be awful to have him die."

As daylight came softly stealing, the invalid awoke and groaned. His nurse rushed upstairs; yet though she went so quickly, she paused at the door, and, going to the bed quietly, stooped and looked in her patient's face.

"How do you feel, my boy?"

"Oh, dear! I want to go home."

"Do you? But you can't, you know. You're too sick. But if you don't get better, we'll send for your mother. What street does she live on in the city?"

"Oh, don't send for my mother!" he exclaimed, staring. "Don't send for her here."

"Well, well," answered the woman, startled at his earnestness, and wondering what special objection he could have to her plan. "Don't worry! You'll go home, sometime."

Jotham lay quietly. The pain in his head was a little less severe, but still it ached, and he was weak. His broad-faced nurse smoothed his pillow, wiped his brow, his cheeks, and his lips, and stooped over him so tenderly, that he thought it could not be Mrs. Higglesey.

"How good you are!" he said, in a faint voice, as she bathed his limp hand.

The words went to her heart, and a faint streak of love glimmered there. She looked in the bright eyes, now so weary, stroked back the chestnut hair, and remembered long years ago when a little child lay in her arms and breathed away its infant life. It was a little boy, and she wondered whether, if it had lived, it would have been as handsome and as bright as Jotham. Then a tear stole from her eye and the sick boy noticed it.

"Are you very tired?" he asked.

"No, Jotham, not very. Why do you ask?"

"You have been up all night with me," he added, "and you weep."

She put up her hand and brushed away the tear.

"There, Jotham, never mind. I had a little boy, once. That's all."

"And did he die?" asked Jotham, looking anxiously in her face.

"Yes, he died. If he had lived, maybe he would have been some like you."

"Oh, not like me!" he answered. "I am not good."

She smiled a little. "That's what we all say, my boy. Good people are never willing to acknowledge their goodness. They feel so kind o' humble like, you know. That's what our minister says. Should you like to see our minister, some day?"

"Yes'm."

"Well, he'll be down here soon. He comes once every winter. He'll like to talk with you, 'cause you talk so much grammar, and know so much. You shall have on your own good clothes, when he comes; there I declare, I'll tell Enoch so! I wish you was my own boy, I do."

She went downstairs directly, and Jotham closed his aching eyelids and pondered upon what she had

said. It seemed to him that she was another woman. He could not believe her mercenary, hard disposition could be so softened. But when she came back again, still kind, bearing in her hand a soothing drink, he looked at her again, and he saw it was really Mrs. Higglesey.

"I will always love you," he murmured, as she held the cup to his lips.

"I hope so," she answered, gently.

When she went downstairs, she carried her softened mood with her, but her husband gave it little attention. He had seen her by the bed of sickness before, and he knew she was always a changed woman at such times. He did not try to read below the surface, nor seek to find the gold which must be somewhere hidden in such a nature.

CHAPTER X.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.



DAY after day Mrs. Higglesey nursed and watched, until the invalid was once more able to come downstairs. Then she brought her best rocking-chair into the kitchen, put pillows into it, and bolstered up her patient before the warm kitchen fire. She even produced a chicken, which had been frozen to keep for company, and from this she made a nourishing broth. Sometimes she talked, at others she went silently about her work, while Jotham leaned back his head, closed his eyes, and thought.

There was much in his thoughts to give him pain, and yet he was not wholly unhappy, for he had found a new friend, and her kindness penetrated his heart. He revolved again his idea of going home, but now there was mingled a reluctance to leave the good woman who had so befriended him.

It seemed ungrateful to go from her just as she had raised him from a terrible illness, and he said to himself, "No, I'll not go yet. It would be wrong. Besides, I have no money to go with, and I cannot walk so far on the snow. I am not strong."

Nourishing food and care soon restored him again, and he was once more able to go out; but Mrs. Higglesey would not allow him to be called at four o'clock, nor would she consent that he should chop again in the woods.

"Wall, the fact is," said Mr. Higglesey, "the boy must do something. I can't afford to board and clothe him for nothing."

"Let him draw the wood to the door, then," remonstrated the woman.

Mr. Higglesey thought a moment. "Wall, wall, I suppose it must be so; but it's mighty hard on me to do all the chopping, myself."

However, he submitted to the decision of his wife, and, taking Jotham out, instructed him in the art of managing the oxen. Then, patiently, every day Jotham drove to the woods, loaded his sled, and brought the wood to the door. If the oxen proved refractory, refusing to turn as he wanted them, Mrs. Higglesey came out and assisted him. She could

take the long stick, and, wielding it over the heads of the oxen, could turn and direct them with as much skill as her husband.

Many, many times were the boy's feet weary with carrying those heavy boots across the snow, keeping his even pace beside the oxen. His clothes, too though warm; seemed uncomfortable. He did wish Mrs. Higglesey's heart would so far expand that she would give him a new suit, but he soon found that such wishes were vain. She would not have given them to an own son. She would have thought it a sin and an extravagance.

"Coarse clothes to work in," was her motto; and upon this principle she acted. On Sundays, both she and Mr. Higglesey came out in very comely apparel, but the moment they reached home, this was laid one side, and the working clothes were resumed. Therefore, though she had continued her kindness to Jotham since his illness, he still wore the economical suit. Often he was ashamed. Sometimes men came to the barn on business, and the boy's cheeks flushed as he saw their eyes examining curiously his garments. He wanted to creep out of sight.

He had come up to the house one day with a load

of wood. The sun was shining pleasantly, and the snow was melting in the paths. As he had walked by the oxen, he had been obliged to step into the water, which, in some places, was not very clean, and his clothes were splashed even to his frock. Besides, the clear rays from the father of light beat upon his fur cap until drops of perspiration trickled from his forehead. Just as he reached the doorway, a sleigh came from the opposite direction and turned swiftly into the yard. One glance told Jotham it was the minister.

There was a lady and a little girl in the sleigh, and as they paused before the door, Jotham's natural politeness prompted him to go to their assistance, but instantly a consciousness of his unfitness to appear before them held him back, and he endeavored to hide behind the oxen as though not aware of their approach. But Mrs. Higglesey came to the door with her broad working apron and her sleeves rolled to the elbow. She was proud of her condition. She considered it an honor to be buried in work; nevertheless, her reverence for her minister and his wife compelled her to make some apologies.

"Never mind, Sister Higglesey," said the minister, smiling, and laying his coat one side. "We ex-

pected to find you at work. Don't trouble yourself on our account. We can sit right here with you."

But Mrs. Higglesey would not permit that. Jotham was called.

"Make a fire in the parlor just as quick as you can," she said, meeting him at the door, and whispering in his ear. "Then put up the minister's horse and the oxen. Then go change your clothes and come in."

"But Mr. Higglesey expects me back to the woods," he answered.

"Let him expect, then. I can't help it. The fact is, I want you to go into the parlor. You can talk grammar, and they will like to talk with you while I am getting supper. I tell you it's an awful job to get supper for such folks."

Jotham very gladly obeyed her instructions. He hastened to his chamber and pulled off the detested clothes, and when he came into the parlor with his own suit, and his neatly-fitting shoes, in which he stepped so softly, while his hair thrown back revealed his fair forehead and bright eyes, he seemed like a gem in that house of labor. The minister arose to greet him as Mrs. Higglesey introduced him in her quaint way.

"Mr. Tracy," she said, "this is our work-boy, Jotham Wilson. And this is Mrs. Tracy, and this is their daughter Amelia."

They all arose, almost in surprise. It was not often they met one of so gentlemanly bearing in their visits at these rural homes, and Mrs. Higglesey was very proud. She saw at a glance the respect his manners had inspired, and she mused inwardly, "See what it is to be a gentleman! Everybody knows it as quick as they see one. La! I don't see how it's done. I couldn't be a lady if I should try."

She sat awhile with her visitors, and then she went out to commence the great preparations for supper. Mince and apple pies were brought from the store-room, doughnuts, cakes of various kinds, an immense chicken pie, and two or three kinds of preserves, kept only for these state occasions, were brought before the fire. Then the great table must be spread, the china must come from the parlor closet, for which purpose the woman bustled back and forth, stopping to speak to her guests by the way. She continued her work quite contentedly, for she saw that Jotham was exerting his powers to please, and that even Amelia was quite interested.

"That's what 'tis to have a gentleman in the family," she said to herself. "Well, it's handy, any way."

When she returned to the kitchen with a tray full of dishes, she found Mr. Higglesey there, full of wrath.

"So the minister is here, — is he?" Why didn't you send the boy down to tell me? A pretty time this for me to git here! Where's the boy?"

"He's in the parlor, Enoch Higglesey."

"In the parlor! Wall! If that aint a new place to put a working-boy! Why didn't he unload that wood?"

"'Cause I wanted him in the parlor. You don't know anything about it, Enoch Higglesey. You think I can git all this supper and talk in the parlor at the same time; but I can't, and I've got Jotham in there. He can talk grammar as well as the minister, and I heard him telling all about a book, or some such thing, and the minister was listening, and the minister's wife was asking questions, and even little Amelia had drawn her cricket close to his side and was looking in his face as though she thought there was never anybody as pretty."

“Pshaw!” ejaculated Mr. Higglesey. “I want the boy to help me.”

“Well, you can’t have him.”

Mr. Higglesey went to the barn a little out of temper, and Jotham still remained to entertain the guests. He might have been very happy but for that continual weight which hung upon his spirits, and that fear lest by some accident his home and the causes of his leaving should be discovered. Once this afternoon he came near betraying himself. Mr. Tracy suddenly asked, —

“On what street does your father live? I know something of the city.”

Jotham colored and hesitated. Then he answered with prevarication, “B——;” he was about to say, “B—— street,” but instantly he changed it and replied, “B—— place, sir.”

Now, as it chanced, there was just such a place in the city. It bore the same name as the pretty street in the suburbs, on which his own home was situated; but, unlike his street, it was the haunt of all that was vile and low. He saw his mistake the moment he had spoken, but the words had passed his lips and he could not recall them. How meanly he felt! How low he sunk in his own estimation!

It seemed as though another step had been taken from the path of rectitude. He had denied his own birthplace, and had assigned his place amidst the base and the degraded outcasts.

Mr. and Mrs. Tracy glanced at each other, not because they doubted his word, but they knew the character of this place, and they wondered how so fair a flower should ever grow up in its midst. There was a slight check to the conversation, until Mr. Higglesey came in and changed the current of thought; but still Jotham could not forget, and he despised himself. On their way home the minister and his wife talked of the boy.

"Is it possible?" they asked each other. "Could a boy of his appearance be brought up in that miserable place? Then indeed we may never despair of any place."

"I pitied him so, papa," said Amelia. "When you asked him where he lived, how he blushed and stammered! I suppose he was ashamed to tell."

"I noticed it, my dear," replied Mr. Tracy. "I was sorry I asked him. We must do something for him. I hope Mr. Higglesey will permit him to come to the Sabbath school."

"Won't they let him come to the party, next

week?" asked Amelia. "I am sure he would be as pretty as any boy there will be."

"That's a good idea," returned Mr. Tracy. "I'll speak to Mr. Higglesey about it."

Jotham was not happy that night.

"Oh, dear!" he sighed; "what must they think of me? To come from such a miserable place! What made me say it? Why didn't I tell the truth? All this because I ran away from home in disgrace. Oh, dear! what shall I do? I did think I would go home again, but I never can. I grow worse and worse. It is just as Annette used to say: 'Crooked paths lead into trouble.' And I have been going in them till I cannot find a straight one."

But Mrs. Higglesey's feelings were far different. She expatiated on the advantages of having such a boy, and of her own shrewdness in securing him.

"If it hadn't been for me, Enoch Higglesey, you never'd had him. Just think how I contrived up his clothes."

"I wonder who was cross when I brought him home," returned the man, sarcastically.

Mrs. Higglesey did not reply; but feigning excessive weariness was soon lost in the land of that for-

getfulness which restores the weary, and revives the faint.

The next morning, life was resumed in that home of labor with double diligence. The loss of the previous afternoon must be atoned for. Jotham was now pretty well again, and Mrs. Higglesey relaxed her tenderness. Her craving for money, and her unceasing industry asserted their usual sway as soon as her patient was well again. There was so much to do, she always reasoned in excuse, when the possibility of over-work suggested itself.

But though she allowed Jotham to work again, there was a bond established between herself and the boy not easily broken. She loved him as much as she could love anything aside from gain. Many little cakes, and turnovers, and choice bits, made their way to him when he came in tired and hungry.

"There, don't tell Enoch," she would say. "He's a great, strong man; he don't need such things."

These little tit-bits were a great blessing to the boy, whose delicate organs of digestion had never been accustomed to coarse food; and every time that he received such a favor, his heart swelled with gratitude toward the woman who yet carried so much good-

ness beneath the roughness caused by untoward circumstances.

Winter pressed on. Snow-storms showered their fleeces upon the earth, blockading houses, barns, and roads. Those were hard days for the lad, when, with a shovel he made paths to the road, paths to the carriage-house, where the sleighs were stored, paths to the barn, to the corn-barn, to the hennerly, and around the house, till the place seemed a network of snowy by-ways. There were many weary nights, many hours of toil, and many disciplines to which the truant submitted, while only earthly light afforded him comfort, and that was the affection Mrs. Higglesey retained for him. Even in the midst of his labors he could see that with her nature, such as it was, she loved him.

He might have had some other pleasures, but from his dread of mingling among the people. Many men there went often to the city, and he feared lest by some means his circumstances should become known. This fear and the untruth to Mr. Tracy dampened his happiness in the little party to which Amelia insisted he should be invited. It was her birthday; and Mrs. Higglesey, proud that Jotham had been honored by

an invitation, insisted that Mr. Higglesey should take him up in the sleigh, and wait for his return.

"What shall I do all the evening?" asked the old man, who was seldom from home after dark.

"Do, Enoch Higglesey? Why, go to the store and stay, and smoke, and talk, as other men do."

"But I don't see any use in the boy's going."

"Of course you don't; men never do see such things. But I see, and I reckon Mrs. Trencher'd see the use, if her Dan could get an invitation from Amelia Tracy. She's the prettiest girl in all the town; and Dan Trencher can't go to her parties. He can't hold a candle to our Jotham."

"Our Jotham!" sneered Mr. Higglesey. "You talk as though he was ours."

She did not reply. There was something deep in her nature that was never disclosed to her husband. She could not tell him, that while the boy lay burning on his sick-bed, she had remembered her own child that passed away long ago, and that lived to her now only in imagination. She could not tell her husband that this boy seemed to her like her own, for she feared he would only laugh and say it was a woman's whim. Therefore, she turned away, only adding, "Well, he must go to the party, that's certain."

Mr. Higglesey had been somewhat touched with the same pride as his wife, for never before had a boy in their vicinity been invited to so select a place, and he finally consented to his wife's plan. He spent a very comfortable evening in the village store, listening to the gossip of the villagers who strolled in. He carried home so much news that it required several evenings at the oven's mouth to retail it to Betsey in its different parcels. Not only could he tell all that happened in the town during the past months, but all that was to come, often saying, "I'm glad I went."

To Jotham the evening was home-like, except that when he went to those pleasant gatherings at home with Annette, he carried a light and happy heart. But now his conscience was oppressed, and all pleasures seemed tinged with sadness.

Amelia paid him especial attention. She seemed to feel a missionary interest in him. She had found him in a place that appeared so little in harmony with his nature, that her young Christian sympathies warmed toward him. She told her young friends that he was from the city, but forbore to name "B—— place," lest that might prejudice them against him. By Mr. and Mrs. Tracy he was re-

ceived with the utmost respect, and, being thus favorably introduced, he met with a cordial welcome from all. Before the evening closed he had formed quite a circle of acquaintances.

Many simple amusements had been planned for the evening, in all of which he could participate, besides being able to introduce some not known to the others. Then when Amelia played, he could stand by and turn her music, and could join in the songs which he had often sung with Annette, at home. Mr. Tracy invited him to the Sabbath school, and before the evening was over he had nearly forgotten the clouds which hung over him.

Mrs. Higglesey was delighted with the result of the party. When he told her who was there, she shook her head in exultation, repeatedly interrupting him, by saying, —

“The very first young people in town, Jotham. Yes, I tell you, they belong to the real aristocracy. That’s pretty tall for you, I reckon. Well, if I do say it, Enoch Higglesey’s got money in the bank, and folks know it. If he had a mind to he could do well by you; but I s’pose he wouldn’t. Not yet, but sometime, maybe. If you are a good boy and live with us a long time, there’s no knowing what

might happen. We've got neither chick nor child, and I've worked hard to help earn what there is here. I reckon I've a right to say what shall be done with it, and sometime I shall tell Enoch Higglesey. I'm sure we couldn't have a son we'd be prouder of than you, and when the time comes, I shall say so. You might as well have what there is here, as anybody. You're a good boy."

"No, I'm not good," answered he, emphatically; thoughts rushing into his mind with overpowering force.

She smiled as though his reply was but a common expression, such as men are wont to use lest people think them proud of their own merits.

"Well, well," she said, "we'll see. Fill up my wood-box now, and bring me a pail of water."

Jotham considered the hints she had given him, and he could allow them but one construction. She wanted to adopt him. This surely must be her meaning, but instinctively he shrank from it. Although she was so kind, yet he had one mother now, — a dear lady-like mother whose heart he knew was breaking, and to whom he longed to return. Besides, this life of unceasing labor was very wearing to him. He had neither strength nor taste for

it. Yet he did not like to pain the honest woman who was doing for him the best she knew.

Dan Trencher heard of the party and came to see Jotham the next day. He found him in his striped frock and fur cap pumping for the mid-day watering.

“Jimminy!” called Dan, rushing up to him. “Putting into the mark, aren’t you? Getting aristocratic too? That beats me! One of old Higglesey’s boys invited with the big-bugs! The gracious! But say, how on earth do you stand it here? Everybody said you wouldn’t stay with old Enoch, and we thought so too.”

Jotham was not in mood to hear this. Whatever his patrons might be, he felt indebted to them. He saw that they were not malicious, ugly people. Indeed, he doubted whether they were so depraved as the very people who slandered them, and he answered, tartly, —

“You ought to be ashamed, Dan, to speak so of old people. I don’t want your pity. I can take care of myself.”

“Oh, well,” responded Dan, “you’re smart, I see, if you do stand in old Higglesey’s boots.”

“Come,” answered Jotham, “don’t make a fool

of yourself. Maybe you think it's smart to twit a fellow of what he wears. Maybe you think the brains lie in the heels, but mine are in my head, and the boots do not injure them."

There was a snap in Jotham's eye that warned Dan against trespassing too far upon his temper, and he began to talk of other subjects. He wanted to know about the party, but he would not ask, and as Jotham was not communicative, he went home as ignorant as he came.

"I don't care anything about it," he said to his mother when she asked him what he heard.

"But didn't he tell you who was there?"

"I didn't ask him. A pretty looking thing he is to go to parties. They ought to see him as he looks there at the barn. I reckon they wouldn't ask him again. Ask him, indeed!" and the boy's face wreathed itself into scorn.

"For my part," said Mrs. Trencher, "there's something about that boy I don't understand. He has the airs and manners of a gentleman; but he can't be anything to go round in that rig working like a slave every day. There's something rotten in Denmark, as the saying is, and I don't care anything about them."

But notwithstanding this assertion, Mrs. Trencher called upon her neighbor the next day, and went home again more contented. Mrs. Higglesey had very joyfully given her a history of the party, as far as was possible, and Mrs. Trencher was satisfied; for next to mingling in society is the gratification of getting the particulars of those who do.

Thus, with mingled shadows and light, the winter wore away. The snow began to melt. There was no more chopping in the woods, but the immense pile at the door must be prepared and packed into the shed for future use. Day by day and hour by hour Jotham and Mr. Higglesey stood upon the pile, while their axes echoed in the spring air. Rivulets ran where the masses of snow had lain, a mild fragrance was borne on the breeze, the cattle chewed their cuds contentedly where the warm sun shone, the fowls sung their spring-time songs, and the lambs skipped merrily.

Even Jotham revived under the genial influences, and Mr. Higglesey was often surprised by his ringing laugh, or keen sallies of wit. But night invariably brought its despondency, and while his head was on his pillow, remorse stung him like a serpent. There were so many recollections to make

him unhappy, that he knew not how to be at peace. When thoughts of home failed, the vision of the honest Joseph rose to his mind, — the boy who lost his place, because he, the truant, was dishonest. He often wished he knew whether he found a place, or whether his poor mother was suffering because her boy had lost his reputation.

Many were the secret tears that little chamber witnessed, and often he attempted to pray, but was rebuked by conscience, and ceased. How he longed for one confiding friend, just one, to whom he could open his whole soul, to whom he could reveal the very depths of his iniquity! He did not want a friend of the world, but one who knew God and Christ, and who could tell him whether there might be forgiveness and restoration. Sometimes he thought of Mr. Tracy, and half resolved to go to him; but then he shrank from it lest Amelia should know, and he thought it would be a double disgrace to be humiliated in her estimation.

CHAPTER XI.

HOPE LOST.



HIS is a terrible storm," said Harry Wilson, stamping his feet and shaking the snow from his cap. "It's tough down on the coast. Mr. Thompson has lost a lot of goods. The vessel bringing them was wrecked down on the light-house rocks."

"Did the crew escape?" asked Mrs. Wilson, her face turning pale and her voice trembling.

Harry's voice softened, for he saw in a moment the thoughts of his mother.

"Yes, mother, they all escaped. They sent out a boat from the light-house and picked up all the men. There were only eight. I don't believe Jotham was one of them."

"He must be somewhere," answered the mother. "My heart sinks with waiting. I thought I should hear from him before this time. I thought he would write."

"I suppose he is ashamed to write," replied Harry.

"Poor boy!" responded the mother. "If I could but clasp my arms about him! He was always good to me. It was bad companions led him astray."

"I think he led himself astray," returned Harry. "Why don't bad boys lead me?"

"Oh, you have a different temperament, Harry!"

"Well, I'm glad I have. I think Jotham was very mean to go off in this way."

"But you don't know how he felt," interposed Annette, sitting in a rocking-chair, pale and sad. "He told me that night when I found him behind the rock. He said he was ashamed to meet his acquaintances, and that father hated him. I wish father hadn't been so severe with him."

Annette sighed, and Mrs. Wilson looked from the window with a glance of despair; for the wind blew, and the storm increased.

"I can't help worrying," she remarked. "Every night, when the cold winds blow, I lie in my bed and wonder where my handsome boy is. I wonder whether he has a protection from the storm. I long to know whether he has food, or whether, in fact, he is alive. If he would come home, like the prodigal son, how gladly he would be received!"

"I don't know," replied Harry. "Father would have something to say, I think. You know father says, 'Let him stay away till he can behave himself at home.'"

"Yes, Harry, I know he says so; but lately, I see his feelings are more tender. His resentment is abated, and the natural love which he cannot suppress is subduing his anger. I think he would be far more lenient now than when Jotham first went away. I know that he thinks of him often, by day and by night. He watches every vessel that goes out or comes in. He goes to them and inquires who are the men that are on them."

"That doesn't do any good," answered Harry. "Maybe he has gone to Europe, or some other distant country. You know, if he has gone on a vessel, he must go where that does, if he is ever so homesick."

"Yes, I know," responded the mother, wiping the tears from her eyes.

Harry changed the subject of conversation. He did not like to see his mother weep. But though he won her to speak of other things, her thoughts still remained with her absent boy. The storm increased; snow filled the air; the wind piped in the chimney;

and at every fresh gust the mother thought of the cordage of the ships, the flapping sails, the heaving billows, and trembled for the boy she believed to be at sea.

Little more was said of him that day; but the house had a sadness in it, for the thoughts of each were wandering in undefined dread, fearing, trembling, yet striving to hope for the absent one. Even Mr. Wilson appeared dejected that night. He was beginning to despair of the return of the truant; and when at the midnight hour he listened to the howl of the tempest, the spirit of repentance came over him.

"I wish," he said, "I do wish I had tried another method with Jotham. When I command Harry he obeys, but Jotham had a different disposition. I happened to-day to be reading the report of a school-teacher; and he spoke of the necessity of using different methods of goverment and instruction with different children. He said many scholars could be won by love who could not by driven by severity. I thought of Jotham immediately; and I felt almost sure that if I had tried love instead of coercion I might have been successful. He must have been desperate when he determined to go to sea. He had not a nature for such a life of hardship, although he

was bold and defiant. His tastes were refined by nature; and if these boys had not possessed an outward show of good-breeding, they could not have seduced him."

"You would not scold him now, if he should come home, would you?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"I don't know," he hesitatingly answered. "I do not feel just as I did about it. I have thought no punishment could be too severe for him; but I am not sure. I may have been wrong in my ideas."

Mrs. Wilson inwardly thanked God. She saw that Jotham's absence was producing an effect upon his father's mind, which neither entreaties nor reasoning could have accomplished, and it removed from her one anxiety. She felt that, if the truant should return, he would be received with forbearance; and now, more than before, she longed to hear his footsteps and to see his face.

But the winter passed without any intelligence from him, and spring brought no tidings. Annette was quite recovered, and once more resumed her studies; but her happy cheerfulness could not come back. There was ever a weight on her spirits, a shadow in her heart. Something was wanting. A glad voice was silent, a cheerful step was missing. When she

played and sang there was a chord broken in the melody, — one part was voiceless. Little reminiscences were lying about speaking mutely of the absent; a ball which it had been his delight to toss in the air; a book, the gift of a friend; a cap partly worn; a pair of gloves; a slate, with examples half done; a pencil with a point of polished roundness; a scrap of writing, — all these were silent memorials, and each was husbanded with zealous care.

Grandfather and grandmother wrote often, for they could not believe Jotham would be long absent.

“And yet, I know,” said grandmother, “if he has gone to sea, he cannot come back till his vessel comes; so we must be patient, and hope for the best.”

“I reckon a sea-voyage will do him good,” grandfather responded. “He needed discipline, and he will get it there. Some of his braggadocio will come out of him, I fancy.”

“But he was a good boy, after all,” returned grandmother. “He was bold and generous.”

“He had an undisciplined confidence in himself,” replied grandfather. “He wanted to show off. This was why he fell a victim to bad boys. He must

needs try to do as they did, because he thought it was smart."

"Ah, well!" said grandmother, "Poor boy! I hope he will come back again."

And still the days rolled on, bringing no tidings, bearing no hope save that dormant one which would not be crushed. The snows of winter disappeared, the song of the birds trilled in the balmy air, even the city brightened; but most of all the fresh country prepared for her adorning. The buds expanded, the grass sprang from the earth, joy breathed on the gales, and life awoke from its stupidity.

But if spring brings quickening and joys to a rural people, it also brings labors. Innumerable duties crowd at once. In doors and out the hum of industry sings its multitudinous calls. Farmers rise early and toil late, for the earth invites them to open her pores with the ploughshares and deposit in the furrows the seeds which shall bring forth fruit for man and beast.

Jotham, in his country home, watched these phenomena with increasing interest. He had seen farms, hitherto, only in the summer when they were decked in their fullest livery; but now he saw their barrenness, and observed how day by day, the new growth

was struggling to cover them once more with nature's beauties. He would have delighted in the spring-time revel if he could have found time. The little calves frisked on the tender grass, the lambs skipped, and he, too, would have leaped and frolicked but for work.

He thought he had been busy all winter; but now he found that winter had been but a play-time. There seemed no pause, no cessation now. Eating was accomplished in haste, sleep was diminished, and from morning till night it was dig and toil, toil and dig. Even Dan Trencher was obliged to work now, so that he came less often to see the strange boy at Higglesey's, who attracted and repelled, at once. Everybody was at work. Only on the Sabbath did neighbors pause to congregate, and then it is possible labor was in their thoughts. Certainly it was in their conversation as they waited around the church doors during noon recess.

"That's a smart boy o' yourn," said a man to Mr. Higglesey. The two were standing beneath the sheds eating the dinner their wives had put in their pockets.

"That's a fact, deacon," replied Mr. Higglesey. "I never saw a better."

"What do you pay him?" asked the deacon, drawing a little nearer, as though on the Sabbath business should be spoken in an undertone.

"Wall, deacon," replied Mr. Higglesey, observing the movement, "the fact is, I haven't made much of a bargain with him yet. I shall do as well by him as anybody would."

"Yes, hem," responded the deacon; "well, I was talking with the boy a few minutes ago. He's just what I should like, and if you —"

"Hold on," cried Mr. Higglesey. "There's no use in talking, Deacon Tuttle. I can't spare the boy, no way, and my wife — why, she just sets her life by him."

"Oh, well," returned the deacon, "I don't want to be unfair, any way, but I thought maybe I could pay more —"

"There, don't speak of it," interposed Mr. Higglesey. "I can pay as much as any man, I reckon."

The deacon said no more, but Mr. Higglesey went home disquieted and narrated the conversation to his wife at the earliest opportunity.

"You see just how 'tis, Betsey," he said to his wife. "All our little plan is spoiled. I've got to pay the boy a good price, or lose him. He'll find out he

can get more, and he'll be off. I reckon I'd better make a bargain with him."

"If you'd only do as I want you to," returned the woman, "you wouldn't have to pay anything."

"What? Take him for my boy, and tell him he may have all there is here when I'm done with it if he'll only live with us. I don't know about that. I guess 'twould cost about as much as 'twould to pay him by the month."

"But you could never have a better boy to work than he is. He never flinches from anything, and 'twould be a good thing to have a boy of our own. We're growing old."

"Wall, wall, pshaw! Women are always full of their nonsense. I'm going to make a bargain with him. I'll give him enough to cut off the deacon's chance of getting him."

The next day Mr. Higglesey had a long talk with Jotham. He described to him the advantages of being prudent; told him how boys grew rich by saving as much as by earning; and finally with a great flourish, offered him a certain sum if he would stay with him till fall.

"You see," he said, "this is the best thing you can do. You won't need to use much money this

summer, and when fall comes, you will have a nice little sum."

"But," said Jotham, "Deacon Tuttle spoke to me, yesterday, and he offered me more than you have."

"Wall, wall, then. I'll give you more. I'll give you as much as he will, and you won't have to work any harder, either. The deacon's a hard master, if I do say it. I'll pay you all at once, next fall, and you can carry it home to your father. I'll let you ride down to the city some day and see your folks."

"No, no," answered Jotham, looking up with a start; "I don't want to go."

"Don't want to go? Well, that is strange. Shall I call and tell them?"

"No, no!" responded the boy, still more terrified.

Mr. Higglesey couldn't understand this refusal. It indicated something wrong, and that night, after Jotham had gone to his room, while the pipe was in the oven-flue, he expressed his opinion.

"Betsey, there's something wrong about this boy."

"What's the matter now, Enoch Higglesey?"

"Well, Betsey, why don't he want to go home? or why don't he want me to go there sometime when I'm down to the city with my marketing?"

"Maybe he's ashamed of his folks, Enoch. You know B—— place is very low."

"No, Betsey, there's some other reason. I'm going to find his folks the very next time I go down."

It was a week after this that Mr. Higglesey loaded his wagon with market produce, harnessed his two horses, and at two o'clock in the morning started upon his ride. Not a word did he hint to the boy whom he had called up to assist him, but he told Betsey he should never come home till he had found B—— place, and had some news to bring back.

Night came, but not Mr. Higglesey. Jotham grew anxious, watching the roads continually, but Mrs. Higglesey seemed quite at her ease. She assisted in milking, finished her evening household duties, and then with her knitting sat down by the open door in the warm twilight. Jotham took a seat on the low stone step. The heavy winter clothes had given place to a simple pair of overalls, and the fur cap had been exchanged for an ancient straw hat left at the house by some former workman. Mrs. Higglesey boasted to Mrs. Trencher that the boy hadn't cost them a single cent of "real money," yet.

Jotham sat before the prudent woman now, tired with his day's work, but with anxiety on his face.

"I'm afraid he is tipped over, Mrs. Higglesey," he said, as twilight deepened into darkness, and no horses appeared in view.

"I guess not," she answered. "Enoch Higglesey knows how to manage his horses. I never could see how he was so careless that night you came here."

"But something might happen, Mrs. Higglesey."

"La, don't you worry, boy. He had business in the city."

She closed her lips with a grip, as though the business was too important to be told, and Jotham, leaning against the house, closed his eyes in weariness. Presently the woman spoke again.

"There'll be plenty of work to do, pretty soon," she said. "Another man next week. A smart one too. He'll make work fly. Then hay-time'll come by and by, and then there'll be three or four men. Besides, I'm going to board the teacher this summer."

Jotham listened in a sleepy mood. He cared little what they did. He saw nothing in the life he was living but weariness and pain. Since the spring opened, there had been no rest, and many nights

his frame quivered from exhaustion. Mrs. Higglesey seemed not to understand him, although she meant to be kind. She had seemed to change since the summer labors had commenced. The effects of the boy's illness had faded from her mind, and she had resumed her former imperious manner. Nothing was too hard for her to undertake if a little money was to be gained, and the more numerous were her cares, the more her energies rose to meet them. Then everybody was pressed into service. Feelings were nothing. How to do the most in the smallest space of time was the grand problem. Love sunk under the pressure, and was crowded out of sight. In a word, she drove, and the family team went before her at a swift pace.

Sometimes Jotham became utterly discouraged. He could see no end to his toils. He was weary at night, and weary in the morning, yet he felt bound to the woman by a tie of gratitude. Her kindness while he was sick he could not forget, and he saw that she loved him now. Often some sudden act of kindness showed him her heart, fettered though it was by worldly gain.

An hour passed this night, while she knit by the light of the rising moon, and he dozed, longing for

his bed. Then came the sound of horses, and presently Mr. Higglesey drove into the yard. There was a strangeness in his manner. He said little, but when Jotham had gone to his chamber, he exclaimed, suddenly, "Betsey, the boy has lied. He's got no folks there."

"I don't believe it, Enoch Higglesey. I don't believe Jotham would tell a lie. You missed 'em some way."

"How could I miss 'em? I went down to B—— place, and I inquired of everybody there. It's an awful place. Ragged children, disconsolate old people, haggard women, and ugly men. I went into holes of misery, and I asked everybody. I don't believe he ever lived there. How could such a fellow as he come out of that place? I know he never did. He has lied. There's something wrong about him."

"What shall you do?" asked the woman, staggered by her husband's determined manner. "Shall you send him away?"

"Wall, Betsey, I've thought it all over, coming home, and the case is like this. If I say anything to him, likely as not he'll clear out, and you know the hurrying work is just coming. He's a good workman,—that I will say of him. He knows what

he is about, and if he goes away I can't make his place good. But 'taint best to trust him. Don't let him know where your money is. Don't let him know where anything is, for I tell you there's something wrong about him. If he did come from B—— place, he has come from a den of iniquity; if he did not come from there, he has lied, and there's the long and the short of it. But there's one thing sartin. He's got to work. You needn't favor him nor coax him. I'll have his money's worth out of him."

Mrs. Higglesey felt convinced of the propriety of her husband's conclusions, and her faith in the lad was shaken. She saw that there was some discrepancy for which she could not account; yet when he came down the next morning, and she looked in his fair face, she was loath to believe him guilty of wrong. His eye seemed so frank and open, and his countenance so expressive of intelligence, that her heart denied what her judgment believed.

But Mr. Higglesey had become fully prejudiced against him, and a new life dawned upon the boy. Mr. Higglesey grew harsh toward him. He no longer gave his commands in a spirit of kindness. He ordered, and Jotham was driven hither and

thither without mercy. The new hired man felt at liberty to imitate his master, and he too directed the boy till his young life was scarcely better than if he had been born under slavery.

At first, Mrs. Higglesey tried not to change toward him. Her woman's heart had in it a spicing of tenderness; but, gradually, as Enoch's belief gained credence in her mind, insensibly it affected her. Jotham missed her words of tenderness, longed for the cakes she used slyly to tuck into his pockets, and often wistfully looked in her face for the glances of love that formerly beamed upon him. But all love seemed dried away, and he thought that work had absorbed her nature.

Then he longed for his own mother, or for some friend, some one to whom he could look for one word of sympathy. True, Mr. Tracy spoke kindly to him on the Sabbaths, and Amelia always gave him a smiling bow. His Sabbath-school teacher manifested an interest in him, and some of the young people who had formed his acquaintance bowed to him in the church aisles. But these were only Sabbath occurrences, shut apart from each other by the dreadful weeks at home. They seemed rather like periodical dreams than like any part

of his real life. To none of those friends could he open his soul's afflictions.

Thus the spring passed, and summer stole into her place. Scorching rays beat down upon the laborers' heads; and vegetation flushed into luxuriance. The busy harrows and hoes fought with the weeds that grew apace; the days were long and the nights short. Every moment of the latter was needed for sleep, yet often Jotham could not sleep. He was too tired, and, when he should have been sleeping, he was often wiping away the tears that trickled from his eyes. Yet he could not cry in peace, for now the new farm-laborer was his bedfellow, and, if a little sob attracted his attention, he laughed, and called him a baby.

Thus he lost the comfort of his little chamber. In that room, which had been his only quiet resort, there was peace no longer. Its sanctity was invaded. Besides, he could not rest, for the coarse man, heedless of the boy, usurped so much of the bed that there was scarcely room to stretch the young, tired limbs.

Darkness enshrouded the soul of the sufferer. Turning to look for comfort, he saw only discouragement. Clouds were above him, blackness be-

neath, and there was not a friend to help him in his extremity.

Yet there was a Friend. One unseen was watching the soul under discipline for its own benefit. He knew what was needed by His child, for He had fashioned him out of clay, and put a spirit within him.

Sometimes Jotham thought of this Friend. The hallowed influences which had encircled his boyhood could not be wholly thrown off. Sometimes, in the midst of misery, Annette's words would come to him. He would think of her oft-repeated, loving counsel to pray. But his wrong conduct interposed, and he thought surely the heavens were shut against him. No, he dared not pray. He was too wicked.

Mrs. Higglesey saw that his step grew less elastic, and that his cheek was thin; but her pity had faded with her faith in him, and she offered him no hope, no help. Some days he dropped upon the grass in weariness; but ere he could rest, rough voices called him to his work again. Sometimes he leaned upon his hoe; but Mr. Higglesey sounded the note, and that reprieve was ended. Sometimes he thought he would run away; but he had no

money, nor would Mr. Higglesey pay him till the summer work had closed.

Then he groaned inwardly, saying, "O Annette! How true were your words! The crooked paths of wrong lead to sorrows; but straight roads ascend to bliss. I shall never know that. I shall never see happiness again!"

CHAPTER XII.

ELLEN JORDAN.



OFT morning breezes floated in and out through the open windows of the old farmhouse. The sounds of labor mingled with the notes of nature. The hum of insects, the twitter of birds, the rattle of dairy-pans and the short click of hoes were the rural music of that homestead, above which rang out the clear voice of Mrs. Higglesey in command, while her steps jarred the kitchen floor across which she hastily walked.

"Put these pans on the grass," she called to Jotham. "Hang the pails in the sun. Carry that milk to the pigs. Stir up some dough for the chickens, and then bring me in half a dozen pails of water. Step quickly, now, for we must have breakfast directly."

With hasty steps the boy obeyed. From order to order he went, fulfilling each in its turn, and as he

stood by the well, drawing the water from its cool depths, he paused a moment to breathe. Leaning his head wearily against the rope from which the bucket was suspended, he listened to a robin near. Suddenly another sound fell upon his ear, — a sound which almost stilled his pulses, sending the blood from his face, and bringing to his memory a rush of recollections. He quickened his attention, and listened once more. Was he in a dream, or was it some strange reality?

Softly the sound came again, and more distinctly. His pale face turned toward the window whence the sound proceeded, and then he understood the words, "Our Father who art in Heaven."

The boy's hands released their grasp upon the rope, and the bucket fell into the water with a splash; but he heeded it not. His only utterance was "Annette, O Annette!"

The splash of the water attracted Mrs. Higglesey, and looking from the window, she called, "What you doing there? Come, be quick."

He turned toward the well again, mechanically, for Mrs. Higglesey was but secondary now. That voice from the window was all he heard. He could distinctly distinguish the words, and he could scarcely

restrain himself. It was a humble prayer, full of the spirit of devotion and love, and the voice which uttered it was the voice of his own sweet sister Annette. Surely it must be she.

“Come, come!” called Mrs. Higglesey. “What are you about? Fetch in that water, quick.”

Slowly he obeyed, but his soul was in a tumult. His thoughts were flashing back and forth from this voice to his home, and from his home back to the voice. “Who could it be? Was it a spirit? No. His good judgment could not for a moment believe that. Was it Annette? That could scarcely be. He stumbled into the house with his full pail, and a quantity of the water spilled over to the floor.

“Good-for-nothing blunderhead!” called Mrs. Higglesey, with a voice heavier than usual. “What ails you this morning? You’d better mind what you’re about! That’s a pretty slop now, just as breakfast is ready, and the school-ma’am here too! Haint I been all the morning a-cleaning and scrubbing so as to have the room decent for her? Get the mop now, and wipe that up yourself. Do it quick, too, and then bring in some more water. You might have got two pails while you were getting that one.

Enoch Higglesey don't pay for laziness; so you'd better take care."

The boy spoke not a word, but hastily obeyed her directions. His airy visions had fallen. It was not Annette he heard, it was the new school-mistress. She had come the evening before, and he had not known of her arrival. So then there was no one for him to love, and his conscience whispered that this was just, for if he had left all that was dear to him, he ought to suffer the consequences.

Presently the men came in to breakfast, and the young teacher came quietly from her room. Jotham glanced at her, and his eyes involuntarily followed her movements. There was no introduction, but Mrs. Higglesey placed a chair beside her own, and the young girl took it with a slight bow, and a quiet "thank you." She seemed like a gem dropped among those coarse people. Two working-men besides Jotham were now there, and Mr. Higglesey felt the pressure of his business. With rapid motions the men dipped into the potatoes and salt pork, eating as though each was striving against the other, while Mr. Higglesey planned the day's labor. "We must have that corn hoed before dinner," he said. "Haying will be here soon."

Jotham felt ashamed to eat so rapidly in the presence of those liquid eyes that were ever and anon resting their gaze upon him, but he knew there was no alternative. Mrs. Higglesey never allowed lingering at her table, and he must eat quickly or go without.

"Come, Jotham," said Mr. Higglesey, as the men rose from the table, "get your hoe, and follow us."

Once more the boy glanced in the face of the young teacher. She was looking at him earnestly. Then her large, liquid, brown eyes wandered to the two men,—to the hard face of Mr. Higglesey,—to the broad countenance and capacious waist of the energetic mistress of this household,—then back to Jotham, and his cheeks crimsoned under her gaze. He felt as though she was reading his thoughts, and trembled at his own unworthiness. His life came in review before himself, as though a judge were passing sentence of condemnation upon him. Yet there was nothing stern in that fair countenance: its expression was purity and love. But even as that morning prayer had recalled Annette to his mind, so those searching eyes recalled the same sister's brown orbs to his recollection. When Mr.

Higglesey reached the outer door, the fascinated boy had not moved from his seat, and the old man looked back wrathfully.

“Why don’t you start, boy?” he demanded. “Come on, quick!”

The girl glanced from the speaker to the boy, and Jotham saw her inquiring expression. He was conscious of a feeling of shame, — the same which he had experienced under the questions of Mr. Tracy. He felt ashamed of his position, because he knew he was where he ought not to be. He knew that he ought to be in his own home, attending his own school, and fitting himself for the duties of coming manhood. Instead of that, he was wasting his time in labors for which, by nature, he was unfitted. He was destroying his own respectability by deserting his own home; he was making himself unhappy, and was dishonoring his friends. He passed out with tumultuous feelings, and when he was gone, the girl turned to Mrs. Higglesey, inquiringly.

“Is that your son, Mrs. Higglesey?”

“No, Miss Jordan; ’tis a boy we hire. He came along here after work. We don’t know who he is. He says his name is Jotham Wilson, and he told where his folks live; but we can’t find ’em, and we

expect he has told a falsehood. But he's smart to work, and so Mr. Higglesey keeps him."

"He is a fine-looking boy," Miss Jordan replied.

"Well, yes, he is; that's a fact. I did think the world of him till we found he hadn't told us the truth. But we do know that he has no father living where he said they lived."

"Did you charge him with the untruth?"

"No. Enoch said maybe he'd be angry, and go off before his time would be out. You see he's a good boy to work, and we don't want to spare him."

Mrs. Higglesey arose and began her work, and Miss Jordan returned to her room; but she could not erase from her mind the bright, intelligent face that had been opposite her at the table. She could not forget the earnestness with which she had discovered him furtively watching her, nor the sigh which escaped him as he arose to follow Mr. Higglesey. She was strangely interested in him, and Mrs. Higglesey's account of him increased that interest.

Her school was half a mile away; and, as she could not come home to dinner, she placed a light lunch in her reticule, and went forth to her summer's task. The birds sang to her their morning carol, and she looked upon nature with a happy heart, while a

prayer arose to her lips that she might be useful to the little ones under her charge.

Jotham came in at noon, hoping to see her pleasant face; but he was disappointed. His soul had been surging vehemently during the forenoon. That prayer and those brown eyes had haunted him. It seemed as though the spirit of Annette had come to him, reproving him with a silent gaze, and saying, "Why do you so, Jotham? Come home to me! oh, come!"

He had not been so diligent as usual. He could not work. His hands utterly refused their toil, and his thoughts careered within him like the vagaries of a drunken man. Many sharp reproofs had come from Mr. Higglesey, and then he tried to work steadily; but soon his labor was forgotten in his excitement, and then Mr. Higglesey called again, —

"What ails you, boy? If you expect me to pay you, you'd better work, I can tell you. None of your laziness on my farm! Pony up, or quit."

Jotham had half a mind to say "I'll quit!" but something restrained him. The same guilt which had brought him to this condition kept him still in bondage.

Miss Jordan came home at night, and at the tea-table the harassed boy met again those strangely

fascinating brown eyes. He looked at them every moment, when he thought they were not observing him, and they looked at him in the same way. Often their glances met, and then Jotham looked down confused; but she smiled at him in kindness, as though she would win him to her. He seemed so utterly unlike the men beside him, that the contrast made him gleam the brighter, and, besides, there was a sadness in his dark eyes, a hidden hopelessness, which, though never observed by Mrs. Higglesey, was quickly noticed by the more gifted teacher.

"I never saw a prettier boy in my life," she said to herself, in the mute language of her own heart. "How could they speak so unkindly to him this morning?"

The week passed away with this mutual interchange of glances. Neither had spoken to the other, for there had been no opportunity; but each strove to read the other by the keen observance of the eyes. Miss Jordan felt sure that if she could but become acquainted with him, he would be a companion for her, and she really longed for companionship. Mrs. Higglesey treated her with great respect, but there was no harmony between their natures, and she felt like one solitary. Sometimes at twilight she walked

in the yard with a book in her hand, and wished for some one to mingle thoughts with hers; but the twilight hour was never a time of rest at that home. There were the milking, and numerous other duties, which allowed no leisure. She saw Jotham going from place to place, and she pitied him, for he went like one compelled, rather than with a willing heart.

The Sabbath came, with its rural stillness. The day-laborers had gone to their homes, and there gathered around the morning table only Mr. and Mrs. Higglesey, the young teacher, and Jotham. Miss Jordan felt less restraint; and as the conversation turned upon the church services and upon the minister, she ventured to talk quite freely; but Jotham said nothing. He was very unhappy. The week had brought a series of trials to him. The presence of Miss Jordan, and her striking likeness to Annette, had kept him in a continual agitation. He had blundered and he had been careless. Heavy reproofs had fallen upon him, and many nights he had wept himself to sleep.

He still went to church, for Mrs. Higglesey considered it a great sin to idle away the Lord's day in sleep or in mere pleasures. At the hour for church Jotham appeared in his Sunday suit. It

was the same he had worn there, and so carefully had it been treated that it was scarcely changed.

"I declare, what a handsome boy he is!" Miss Jordan remarked, as he came to the door with the horses.

"He looks well enough," Mrs. Higglesey replied; "but to my mind, handsome is that handsome does."

"I am sure he seems to be good," the teacher responded.

Mrs. Higglesey shook her head knowingly.

"I thought so once, Miss Jordan; but things look too suspicious. I can't help thinking Enoch's right. I'm real sorry, for I could like him ever so much if I could be sure he was good."

Miss Jordan was puzzled. She could not reconcile that bright face with ugliness. She could not trace in those lineaments any lines of maliciousness or of deception. In spite of Mrs. Higglesey's suspicions, she liked him, and she talked with him as they rode to and from church together. Her intelligent questions drew forth intelligent answers, and she felt as though she had found one who might help to make her summer pleasant if she could but overcome his reserve.

That night she sat in her room. The house was

quiet, for busy as were Mr. and Mrs. Higglesey through the week, they endeavored to keep the Sabbath day. Jotham was allowed rest on that day, and, going into the yard after the family supper, he sat down under the shade of a tree upon a log which lay among the grass, and buried his face in his hands. His thoughts were in his home, and his soul was full of remorse. Presently a sound of music burst upon his ear, and a full voice sung,—

“Nearer my God to thee,
Nearer to thee.”

It was Annette's favorite hymn. As the first strain fell upon Jotham's ear, he caught his breath, listened again, and then burst into tears. From verse to verse the singer passed, carrying her listener's thoughts with her in each strain. Presently he wiped away the tears, and, looking up into the heavens, thought, not of Annette, nor of home, but of the singer herself, and of the God to whom she seemed to be drawing nearer. She finished the hymn, and then, as though not satisfied, began it again. Jotham loved singing, and Miss Jordan's voice was very full and sweet. Once or twice, tears started again, but he brushed them away, and by the time the singer reached the last verse the sec-

ond time, he had so far recovered his natural mood, that, scarcely conscious of what he was doing, he struck the chord and joined the last line with his own voice. He did not sing loud, but the strain was heard, and in a moment the fair singer's face appeared at the window.

"So ho!" she said, with a smile. "That was you, was it? I am right glad you can sing. Come in here, now, and we will have some more music. I was just wishing I had some one to help me."

The boy shook his head.

"So you won't come, will you? Well, I'll come out there. It will sound all the better in the open air."

Before Jotham could realize her actions she darted through the sitting-room adjoining her small room, and, with her book in her hand, joined him on the log.

"What a nice seat this is!" she said. "It must have been left here for our accommodation. I am so glad you sing!"

"I do not sing much," he responded.

"Ah, but I heard you, and if you can sing one strain, you can sing more. Did you ever see a book

like this?" and she handed him a small Sabbath-school singing-book.

"I had one at home," he replied, his voice quivering.

"Did you? Then of course you know the tunes. I am so glad, for I never like to sing alone. At home I had two sisters to sing with me, and two brothers. Such grand concerts as we had! Do you know this tune?"

She had turned to "The Beautiful Land," every line of which was familiar to Jotham as the alphabet.

"Yes, I know it," he answered; "but I can't sing much. I don't feel like it."

"Just so my brother used to say sometimes; but we'd always tease him till we got him started, and then he'd sing beautifully, and enjoy it too. I like to sing in the open air, so we'll sing right here till the robins stop to listen."

She spoke so rapidly, her voice was so merry, and her manner was so urgent that Jotham could not refuse. He joined her, timidly at first, but soon he grew interested; his heart warmed with the melody, and he suffered his voice to come out in fullness.

"That was grand," she said, as they closed. "Now let us have another."

Without giving him time to refuse, she turned the leaves, and chose another. Jotham's timidity and almost the sense of his guilt passed away as they sung on. His soul seemed re-created, and his senses were carried away.

Mrs. Higglesey was sitting in her room with her open Bible in her hand. She always read her Bible on the Sabbath, and spent the day very devotionally. No work was allowed which could be avoided, and her face was always more solemn than through the week. The strains of the singing floated in at her open window.

"Now I wonder," she said, rising and going to the window; but nothing was to be seen. She listened again, and could hear the soft melody coming around the corner of the house. "That's somebody," she observed, emphatically, and, going into the kitchen, she looked out at the other side of the house.

"There, Enoch Higglesey, do see!" she exclaimed. "Wake up, and look out here! Now if that aint a pretty sight! And they're singing them Sunday-

school songs as well as they can sing 'em in the Sunday school itself."

Mr. Higglesey rubbed his eyes, and arose from the chair in which he had been dozing.

"Now, Enoch, don't they look pretty? I declare for't, Jotham is handsome;" and then the old wish that he was her own boy arose in her mind, but she choked it down again by thinking of his untruthfulness.

Suddenly Jotham paused and turned to his companion, —

"Miss Jordan, I hope you will excuse my dress. I did not think before. I am hardly fit to sit beside you."

"No matter," she said, laughing. "It was I that came to you, you know. Of course you took off your best suit to save it. I would have done the same if I had work to do. Come, let us sing again; but no,—I have a request to make. Don't call me Miss Jordan. It seems too old. Call me Ellen. That is my name. Now for another tune. We are charming the birds, I am sure."

"That's a fact," added Mrs. Higglesey, coming to the window.

Miss Jordan looked up and blushed.

"I didn't know we had an audience," she said.

"Well, school-ma'am, you needn't be ashamed," replied Mrs. Higglesey. "You do sing equal to the Sunday school."

Then Mr. and Mrs. Higglesey sat by the window while the two entertained them, until Mr. Higglesey called, —

"Wall, wall, boy, that's good; but no more now. You must get up the cows."

Jotham dropped the book, and went obediently. His heart was lighter than common, and his step more buoyant.

"He's a splendid boy," said Miss Jordan, coming to the window where the old people sat.

"All's not gold that glitters," replied Mr. Higglesey; and then he gave the young lady a full account of his suspicions and his reasons for them, adding at the close, "There's no mistake, — there's something wrong about him."

"I don't understand it," replied Miss Jordan. "He neither looks nor appears like a bad boy."

She thought of him much through the week, though she saw him little except at table, for there was no cessation in the work. Early and late the boy was busy, — not moderately busy, but driving, — with Mr.

Higglesey ever prompting him. Yet, even in the midst of his labors, there was a new light in his soul. Miss Jordan's pleasant face met him at table, and he felt the influence of her presence. She became to him as something sacred. He compared her with Annette, and he saw much that was similar, and much that was different. She was more lively than Annette, more mirthful. He remembered Annette as tender and serious, full of deep thought; but Miss Jordan, though equally religious, was playful and fun-loving.

The next Sabbath was rainy. They could not go out, and Miss Jordan persuaded him to go to her room.

"Don't you love to read?" she asked. "Come, I have a few books, and we will read them together."

That was a day of delight to the boy.

"O Miss Jordan!" he exclaimed, as he sat down by her table, "I haven't seen a book, except the Bible, since I have been here. I don't believe there is one in the house."

"No," she answered, laughing; "there is money in this house, — that is all. But I do not believe in that way. I like my father's way. He spends his

money for books and papers, and things that make life pleasant."

Then she went on and gave Jotham a history of her family, and described the place where they lived.

"There," she added, pleasantly, "I have told you who I am; now tell me who you are."

"O Miss Jordan!" he responded, half thrown off his guard by her confiding persuasiveness.

"Well," she returned, smiling.

"I can't tell you, Miss Jordan. I am nobody."

"Ha, ha, ha!" she returned. "Nobody! Why, I read a story once about Nobody, and a sorry time he had of it. No, indeed, you're not nobody, and I'm not the only one who thinks so. I know some one that thinks you are somebody, and a good deal of somebody, too."

"Who is it?" he asked, with curiosity.

"Well, I'll tell you when you have told me who you are."

"Why, I'm Jotham Wilson," he replied, making an effort to speak cheerfully.

"Yes, yes, I know that; and Mrs. Higglesey told me you came from the city. Now I want to know this: have you a father?"

"Yes."

"And a mother?"

"Yes."

"And a sister?"

"Yes; one."

"What is her name?"

"Annette."

"Annette! What a pretty name! How old is she?"

"Two years older than I am."

"Just a year younger than I am, then, because I am three years older than you, you know. I wish I could see her. Is she pretty?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Jordan, she is very pretty. She looks like you."

"Pshaw! you make me blush! Have you a brother?"

"Yes; one."

"Do you go home often?"

"I haven't been since last fall."

There was a tremor in his voice as he said this, and a look of painful agony crossed his face. Miss Jordan noticed it, but forbore to mention it. She felt that she had no right to question him further. She saw that some mystery lay concealed, but charitably thought some misfortune had overtaken him,

and then she tried to cause him to forget his troubles.

“Well,” she said, laughing, “you have told me who you are; now I will tell you who it is that thinks you are somebody. It is Amelia Tracy.”

Jotham colored, and his heart went pit-a-pat, in spite of his efforts to restrain it. Miss Jordan smiled at the effect of her words, and, seeing that she had put joy in the place of sorrow, she selected a book, and they sat down to read. The day fled rapidly to the boy, whose mind was famishing for books, and he thanked Miss Jordan for the kindness she had shown him.

Then another week went by, and haying commenced. Another workman came, and Mr. Higglesey seemed endowed with the fire of youth. He was never weary. He could swing the scythe as vigorously as his smartest man, and not only did he work continually himself, but his men caught the spirit, and the whole farm seemed alive with labor.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUDDEN DEPARTURE.

MISS JORDAN loved to walk at the twilight hour. Sometimes she rambled in the fields, and plucked the wild fruits, or gathered flowers for her room. There were none here to walk with her, for all were too busy to pause in admiration of the beauties of nature. One evening, the zephyrs fanned the heated air so refreshingly that she was tempted beyond her usual limits, and, strolling down the lane, entered the pasture from which the cows had just been driven. Little hills of moss and checkerberry dotted the surface, a few trees were scattered about, and a brook gurgled its way down the gentle declivity. Beyond, dark woods bounded the irregular field.

She wandered on, up and down by the brook, till dark shadows were about her, and she felt that she ought to return. Yet the coolness was re-

freshing, her heart was attuned to praises, and she was loath to go back where loud voices would jar the harmony of her communings. It was nearly dark when she slowly retraced her steps. Near the foot of the lane which led to the house, there was a ledge, or mass of broken rocks piled in confusion, around which the cattle had worn a well-trodden path. Into this path she stepped, under the shadow of the rocks, and slowly walked, picking her way carefully. She was just ready to emerge again, when a faint noise arrested her attention.

She was frightened a little, for the noise seemed to be human, and she wondered who could be hidden in that desolate ledge. Involuntarily her steps quickened, and she was hastening on, when a second sound came louder than the first. It was a moan, a half-wail of anguish, and the young lady paused. Then there came another groan, still more distinct, and she said to herself, —

“Surely, that is Jotham. Can he be here?”

The sighs continued, and as she could distinguish nothing, she called, —

“Jotham!”

There was a hush. Not a response followed her call, and she spoke again, —

"Jotham!

But there was no reply. Confident, however, that he was there, she passed around the ledge, scrutinizing every crevice as closely as the darkness permitted, till on the opposite side she found a crouching form. The face was buried beneath the hands, and the body was convulsed with sobs. She laid her hands upon his shoulder, and spoke gently.

"Jotham, why are you here?"

"O Miss Jordan! I didn't know you were here. I thought I was alone."

"But why are you here, Jotham? And why are you so distressed?"

"O Miss Jordan! There's a cow lost, and Mr. Higglesey sent me to find it."

"And is that why you cry? Come, I'll go with you. Where do you suppose she can be?"

"I don't know, Miss Jordan."

"Well, I wouldn't worry. It is too dark to see far, but we'll wander about a little. Maybe we'll hear her somewhere. Perhaps she likes the cool evening, just as I do, and has walked about to refresh herself. Come, let us follow the brook down a little way."

Jotham repressed his sobs and arose. He was

ashamed to refuse her offer, but still the agony did not leave him, and not even her cheerful conversation could enliven him. At length they reached a mossy bank without hearing or seeing the truant.

"I can't go any further, —indeed I can't," he said, dropping upon the moss. "I'm so tired."

"Poor boy!" she responded. "I don't wonder you are tired. They are great workers here, and I am sure you have never been used to work. Let us sit here a few minutes while you rest. We cannot find the cow."

"But Mr. Higglesey told me not to come back without her," he rejoined.

"Ah, but you can't find her! Very likely she is somewhere in the woods. She must stay until morning."

The boy sighed.

"I dare not go home without her, Miss Jordan. Mr. Higglesey will scold more than ever."

"Well, I will tell him myself. He ought not to be cross about it. My father has a farm, you know, and the cows are often gone over night."

"But I guess your father isn't cross," he added, looking up at her by the light of the stars which were now twinkling above them.

"No, indeed he isn't, Jotham. But there is one thing puzzles me. May I ask you a question, and will you forgive me if I seem impertinent?"

"I will forgive you anything, Miss Jordan."

"Tell me, then, how you came here, and why you stay here?"

He did not answer. A rush of thought seemed to overpower him, and she repeated her question.

"Believe me," she added, kindly, "it is not idle curiosity that prompts my question. I have no wish to learn forbidden secrets. But I feel a strange interest in you. I see you in a position for which you seem totally unfitted. You are intelligent. Your manners are refined. You must have had a good home. Now we all know that God has made people different. Some have capacities for business, some are machinists, some mechanics, some are doctors, some lawyers, some scholars, some ministers, and some have a natural aptitude for farming. All people ought to pursue that occupation for which they are fitted. You seem to me out of place. You are not strong like a boy trained to work. Tell me, do you like this business?"

"No, Miss Jordan, I do not."

"Does your father compel you to stay here?"

Jotham did not reply, but the tenderness of her manner, so like the ways of his own sister, quite overpowered him, and he burst into tears. Miss Jordan appeared distressed.

"Forgive me," she said. "I did not mean to pain you. I thought I could comfort you."

"I do not deserve comfort," he murmured between his sobs.

"Not deserve comfort! Why, yes, you do! The meanest criminal is worthy of pity and comfort. Bad people are often made good by sympathy and love. You are not bad, I am sure."

"I'm the meanest person in the world," he added. "You do not know how wicked I am. You would not speak to me if you knew."

"O Jotham! I do not believe that. But do not cry so. I wish you would let me be your friend. Come, while we are resting, tell me all about yourself. You will feel better. Just imagine that you are talking to Annette. Didn't you tell her your secrets and troubles sometimes?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. My brothers tell me things that they wouldn't mention to father and mother. You

know sisters can always sympathize. Tell me why you feel so wicked."

There was a great struggle in Jotham's mind. He had longed for a friend, and now one had come to him; but could he tell her? Wouldn't she turn from him in disgust? He brushed the tears from his eyes, looked up at the heavens, then down at the earth, then turned, sighed, and at last said, —

"If I tell you a little, Miss Jordan, I must tell a great deal."

"Well, that is what I'd like. Tell me, first, what sent you here. Is your father very poor?"

"Oh, no, no, Miss Jordan! It was because I was so wicked."

"But what did you do?"

Jotham struggled a moment longer with his feelings, then the ice broke, and he said, "I did so many things, so many."

Then he began his life, and rehearsed his story to her without prevarication. All the manly honesty of his nature flowed from his lips. He did not palliate a single crime, and she listened attentively. Once started, it seemed a relief to him to talk, and his words came rapidly, like a pent-up torrent sud-

denly broke forth. His tears ceased, and his heart unburdened itself of its misery.

"Truly," said Miss Jordan, at the close of the narrative, "'the way of the transgressor is hard.'"

Jotham dropped his head. Her remark had little of encouragement, but she quickly asked, —

"What do you think I advise you, Jotham?"

"I don't know, Miss Jordan."

"Well, I advise you to write to your father."

"Oh, I dare not!"

"Why not? Do you think he will never forgive you? I know that he is longing to know where you are. And think of your mother and Annette. Think of the sorrow your absence causes them."

"But if I go home, they would be ashamed of me."

"And are not they ashamed now? When people ask them whether they have heard from you, is not shame mingled with regret in their answers?"

"But I can never go home, Miss Jordan. I could not meet my friends in the street. They would point the finger of scorn at me."

"Perhaps so. That would be one of the penalties you must pay for wrong-doing. You have

got into a path where there are briars. You must expect to get scratched in coming out. But what is the finger of scorn compared to the consciousness of doing right? Get into the way of duty, Jotham, and then stand firm. You are not a coward, I hope."

"I wasn't—once—Miss Jordan. I don't know what I am now."

"But you are no coward now. I am sure of that. Let me think. Let me count the list of your offences. The very first step in your disobedience was when your father told you not to go with those boys whom he believed improper companions. You disobeyed. You secretly went, and they led you into all your troubles. They taught you to smoke, to drink, to gamble in their way, to play truant from school, to use bad words, and finally persuaded you to help rob an old woman's fruit-trees; then you were caught, put in the lock-up, your father took you out, and reproved you. You ought to have expected this reproof. You ought to have submitted quietly; but you would not bear it. You ran away. You left your father because you thought him harsh, and here you are

in the hands of a master who knows no mercy. You have not gained much."

"But, Miss Jordan, you know I have not seen my father since my last offence, which was running away. Do you suppose he would forgive me?"

"Certainly, I do. Did you ever read the story of the prodigal son? They would kill the fatted calf, and bring forth the best robes for you in your home now, Jotham, and neither Annette nor Harry would be unwilling to see you feasted. Why, if you were my brother, I would do everything to show you my joy at your return. Let us go home. You must write this very night."

"I am so tired, I cannot."

"Let me write, then. I will write to Annette. I should like to know her. You say she is good."

"O Miss Jordan, she is very good."

"Now, Jotham, I will write to her, and you shall read the letter. We will not say a word to any one here; but there is One to whom you ought to speak."

"To whom?" he asked, looking in her eyes.

She pointed her finger upward with a reverent look.

"O Miss Jordan, I cannot. I dare not. God would not listen to me."

"Do not say that, Jotham. Is not God a Spirit? Is he not about us and in us? Does he not see and know? Would he not be merciful who satisfieth the wants of every creature? You must pray. You say that you promised your grandmother that you would pray every day. If you had kept that promise, you would now be in your happy home. Come, let us go to the house."

"But the cow, Miss Jordan,—the cow! I had forgotten her. I cannot go up without her."

"You cannot find her now. It is late, and the stars are our only light. See those woods stretch along there. Very likely she is in there."

"But Mr. Higglesey will scold so."

"Never mind that. It was not your fault that the cow went away. She will come in the morning. Think of the new hopes that await you. If they scold, be quiet. Do not reply angrily. Remember that I am your friend. No—I do not say that;—remember that God is your friend. Look up to him. Let holy purposes fill your thoughts. Let high resolves be yours. Determine to be in the future so noble that the past shall be forgotten."

"Oh, I never can remove this stain, Miss Jordan! People will never think well of me."

"Oh, yes, they will! Look to God. He will help you."

Slowly they walked to the house, talking as they went, and Jotham felt as though he had emerged into a new world. He looked upon the young teacher almost as though she were some angel of light who had been appointed to bear away his burdens. Even the hem of her garment seemed sacred. As they came near the door she dropped her serious mood, and resumed her natural sprightliness.

"Now I'll tell you," she said, softly, "I'll manage about the cow. Mr. Higglesey won't dare scold me, you know."

The old man was at the door, listening, and, as the sound of footsteps drew near, he came out and peered through the darkness, calling loudly,—

"Where's the cow, boy? Have you come up without her? If you have you —"

"O Mr. Higglesey," interrupted Miss Jordan, "we can't find her anywhere."

"You, school-ma'am!" said the old man, in astonishment. "How did you come out here? Where've you been?"

"Oh, I was down in the pasture after checkerberries and raspberries and wild flowers, and Jotham came down for the cow, so I went with him, but we couldn't find her. It is too bad, isn't it? I am so sorry. Sometimes ours get away, and mother always feels so badly, because she loses the milk, you know. There are ever so many perplexities in this world, aren't there, Mr. Higglesey? I'm sure I find them. Even in my school things won't always go right, and of course they can't always go right with you, especially as you have so much to take care of. Why, people say you are the richest man in town, and have money in the bank."

Now the young lady had touched the chord which vibrated most easily at the sweep of flattery. He was proud of being thought rich, and the quick words of the girl had borne him quite away from his fretfulness, and lifted him up into the regions of self-respect. He would not use his customary language in her presence, and Jotham went upstairs with a thankful heart.

But though he had escaped the master, the mistress was not so easily foiled. She called after the boy and bade him come down.

"Where's the cow?" she asked.

"I don't know, ma'am. I couldn't find her."

"Couldn't find her! You didn't try. Now I must lose a brim pailful of milk, just by your carelessness. Why didn't you look for her when the other cows came? Why didn't you count and see if they were all there? I tell you, do you be up by the first streak of dawn, and be off with yourself, and don't you come back till you have found the cow."

An hour sooner, the boy would have felt that his last friend had forsaken him; but now there was a warmth within his breast. He had a new friend, one far dearer and better than Mrs. Higglesey. He no longer carried his sorrows alone. He had lain wakefully in his chamber many nights from sorrow; now he could not sleep from excess of joy, and at the first gray dawn the voice of Mr. Higglesey rang in his ears, with a shrill morning call, —

"Be up, and off with you! Don't you come back without that cow. If you do, you'll catch it. The school-ma'am won't get you off again so easy."

Owing to the warmth of the night, Miss Jordan left her door open, and heard the rough tones of Mrs. Higglesey.

"Poor boy!" she said to herself. "Before I sleep, I'll write to his sister. I am sure they will

take him home again, and that is where he ought to be."

Her neat letter was written and laid away for Jotham's inspection; then with a prayer and a smile of contentment she closed her eyes in peace. Mr. Higglesey's rude call at the early hour, and Jotham's weary step down the stairs disturbed her morning slumbers; but she thought of the letter which she was sure would bring relief, and determined to send it at the first opportunity.

The breakfast hour came but no Jotham. Mr. Higglesey grew impatient.

"Fine job, this!" he muttered. "The very best hay weather of the season, and here's the boy, gone, nobody knows where. What's going to become of his work, I'd like to know?"

"And I'd like to know what's to become of the cow!" said Mrs. Higglesey. "There's my cheese. 'Twill miss that milk, I reckon. Some of your fences are rotten, Enoch Higglesey, and the cow has got out."

"My fences are not rotten," replied the farmer, indignant at the charge. "You'll have to milk, Betsey, when the cow comes. I'd like to give that boy a-thrashing."

Miss Jordan looked in the farmer's angry face, and thought how love of money and a life of slavish labor had debased him. She wondered why Jotham should be thrashed because the cow had escaped, and again she remembered her letter to Annette, trusting that the boy would be liberated from his servitude, be restored to his home and to the paths of integrity.

She was not there at noon. She did not see the excitement when Mr. Higglesey came in and learned that the cow had come, and Jotham had not.

"The rascal!" shouted the old man. "I'll give it to him when he comes! He's off getting rid of work. I seed him dragging round yesterday. I knew he was getting lazy. A good deal he's after the cow, and she all the time at home! Which way did she come, Betsey?"

"Why, she came up the road, and I thought every minute I'd see Jotham behind her. Strange! He didn't have no breakfast, you know, and here 'tis noon."

"I'll give it to him," growled the wrathful man. "I'll teach him not to spile another day's work in the middle of haying."

Miss Jordan returned at night, but Jotham had

not come. She was troubled. She remembered his discouragements, thought of the tale he told her the night before, and feared that in remorse he had committed some desperate deed.

"Poor boy!" she mused. "He feels like an outcast, and he has committed some new act of folly, I believe."

But she did not betray him. That which he had imparted to her in secret remained a secret still. She sat by the window and watched for him, hoping that night would bring him; but darkness shut her curtains down, and he was still away. Then she could not avoid forebodings, and, as the night previous she had knelt in thankfulness, so now she knelt in humble, agonizing prayer. She prayed for the wanderer, that he might be restored to the path of rectitude.

Mrs. Higglesey was perplexed, and, in truth, anxious. She had never ceased her interest in the bright boy, although she had been harsh to him of late, through her husband's representations that something about him was wrong.

But Mr. Higglesey was decidedly angry.

"I might have known 'twould turn out so," he said. "He was a street vagabond; I've no doubt. B—— place was probably his home. I guess I'll

never pick up another fellow in the road. Now here I am in the midst of my haying without a boy. Wall, Betsey, there's one consolation: I haint paid him nothing yet. What he has done I've got for nothing."

"That's a fact, Enoch Higglesey. 'Tis an ill wind that blows nobody any good. He's never cost us a cent of money yet, and he has done a good deal of work; and he could do any kind of work too. He was nobody's fool. I hope folks won't find out he's gone, 'cause they're always telling how hard people work here, and they'll say he went off 'cause he had such a hard time."

But people did hear of it. The neighbors were soon aware of the absence of the smart boy who could work fast enough to please old Enoch Higglesey, and they said precisely what Mrs. Higglesey feared. Several nights the outer door was left unfastened, for Mr. Higglesey said, "Like enough he'll come crawling back in the night;" but he came not.

Miss Jordan missed him sadly. She knew not what to do. Should she send this letter to Annette? Would not his friends receive additional pain to hear

from him, and yet find him lost? In the midst of her perplexity she thought of Mr. Tracy.

"Yes," she decided, "I'll tell Mr. Tracy his history. He will tell me what course to pursue. I will tell him next Sabbath, for I shall have no other opportunity."

Mr. Tracy missed the bright face from Mr. Higglesey's pew the next Sunday, and Amelia missed him. She looked across from her own seat, but no dark eyes met her friendly glance. She did not speak of it until night; then, as she stood by her father in the evening hour, she said,

"I did not see Jotham to-day."

Mr. Tracy thought a moment, and then said, —

"Amelia, you know I place great confidence in you. I think I can tell you what I have heard to-day."

Then he narrated the story which Miss Jordan had told to him. He expected to see the girl's countenance sadden, but, instead of that, a smile crossed her lips, and her eyes gladdened.

"Then he didn't come from B—— place at all, father? I'm so glad. That place is so low that I never would tell my friends what part of the city

he came from. I am glad it is B—— street. You know we were there once. It is a pretty place.”

“But I thought, Amelia, that you would be sad to hear of his misconduct.”

“So I am, father; but you say bad boys led him astray, and I have heard you say that many bad boys have reformed and become good men. I do not believe he is very bad.”

Mr. Tracy smiled. “Well, Amelia, we shall see. I have always felt a strong interest in him. Miss Jordan had prepared a letter to send to his sister. I have it here. I shall add a few words, and send it to-morrow. Then we shall know more about it. But where he can be now puzzles me. I imagine he could not work so hard as he was required to, and has gone to seek his fortune in some other place. We must try to find him.”

“You’re a good papa,” said the girl. “You are always doing good for somebody. I know where he’s gone.”

“Where, my child?”

“Home.”

The minister mused a moment, and then added, “It is possible. I hope so. I wonder,—yes,—it may be.”

CHAPTER XIV.

HOME.



LETTER from grandmother!" shouted Harry Wilson, rushing into the house one pleasant morning. "She wishes you and I were there, Annette. The cherry-trees are red with ripe fruit; the blueberries and raspberries are waiting to be picked; the pond-lilies are in blossom, and she wants us."

"No," said Annette; "no, I don't want to go. I should be so lonely without Jotham. It would seem so desolate."

"But you know, Annette, Jotham was always making trouble there. If you and I go, we'd have a quiet time. But grandmother says, why can't we shut up the house, and all come, father and mother with us?"

"No," said the mother, "I'll never shut this house

till Jotham comes, unless the Lord puts me into a narrow one."

"He won't come," said Harry. "He's off to sea, somewhere, and we might as well go. Grandmother wants us, and we ought to make grandmother happy."

"That is true," said Mrs. Wilson. "You and Annette can go. I think you had better."

"It will be so lonely," said Annette.

"Don't think of that," responded the mother. "Think of grandmother. Think how kind she was when you were sick."

"I know it, mother; I'll go."

"Good!" shouted Harry. "Let us go to-morrow."

"We will go day after to-morrow. The vacation is half gone, but we can stay a fortnight."

Harry marched off triumphantly, and began his preparations. Annette wrote a note to her grandmother, and, on the day appointed, they left their home. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were alone. The house seemed voiceless, and Jotham came often between them as a subject of conversation. Mr. Wilson was much softer toward him than at first. His anger had changed to anxiety. He had witnessed the

mother's sorrow over her elder son, and he had sorrowed himself.

"Sometimes I think I was wrong," he said, one day, sitting at his lonely dinner. "If Jotham should ever come back, I would try a different course. I would win him by love. I would spend more time with him. I would treat him with courtesy. I would not command him as though he were a menial, I would speak to him as to one about to enter the same world of duties as myself. I would hold before him noble purposes. I would fill him with high aims, and by personal communion I would help him to advance."

These sentiments led Mr. Wilson to intimate companionship with Harry, and he was surprised to find how maturely a boy could think and reason. He began to see that an impetuous, high-spirited boy like Jotham could not be suppressed. His nature must have vent, and ought to have been directed to some proper opening where his ardent impulses could expand into usefulness; but, failing of such guidance, the boyish elasticity must rebound in its own untrained way. Now that it was too late, Mr. Wilson saw what he might have done for the absent boy. The horse was stolen, and now

he was busily preparing a lock and key for the stable.

Annette and Harry arrived safely at their grandfather's. The evening was warm and they came in quietly, for there was no Jotham speaking pompously, laying all things under tribute for his own benefit.

"Dear children," said grandmother, caressing them as she used to do when their flaxen heads scarce reached to her waist. Now the old lady reached up, instead of down, to kiss Annette's cheek, and Harry was rapidly rising to the same height.

They talked long of Jotham that night, and though they were very happy in grandfather's home, yet, as Annette had predicted, the brother's absence threw a shade over their enjoyments.

"Where could he be? Was he alive? Would he ever come home?"

These were questions asked, but not answered. Grandmother was sleepless that night. She was trying to devise some means of hearing from the truant. She thought of advertising; but his father had objected to that. His pride had revolted. How then could they learn of him? Grandfather said, "Let him go till he is ready to come back. Then

he will behave himself." But grandmother longed to hear from him, and prayed earnestly that the good Lord would restore him to his own home, to truth, to honor, and to peace.

The night wore away to its depths. The air was still, the birds were slumbering. A refreshing coolness breezed over the hills and came in at the windows left open by the sleepers. Grandmother thought she heard a sound outside. She arose and looked from the window, but there was nothing visible. The grass lay smooth beneath the sky, the stars glimmered, and the zephyrs gently stirred.

"How lovely are Thy works!" said the old lady, looking up, reverently; and then she retired again to think of Him who ruleth all things so wisely and so well.

And, during all this time, where was Jotham?

He went out from Mr. Higglesey's that morning with a feeling of desperation. It seemed to him that he had hardly fallen asleep when Mr. Higglesey called him, and he was utterly exhausted. He could scarcely walk the day before, and how could he arise now at this early hour, and work all day through the hours of burning, when the hot sun took away the strength of even strong men? He

heard Mr. Higglesey's last words, "Don't come back till you have found the cow," and went out.

Wearily he traversed the pasture and the woods, searched the adjacent fields, looked behind fences and rocks; but there was no cow. Then he sat down by a raspberry-bush, and, plucking the sweet fruit, ate and thought.

"What shall I do?" was his first question. "Shall I go back without the cow? Mr. Higglesey will be cross, and so will Mrs. Higglesey. She used to be kind, last winter; now she frets at me every day. If I go back I shall have to work the whole day long, every moment, and I can hardly stand, now. Besides, he told me not to come back till I had found the cow; but I can't find her. I didn't lose her, why should I find her?"

When he had picked all the raspberries within his reach, he leaned languidly down upon a tuft of moss, and was soon asleep. The breezes played across his brow, and the hot sun shone upon him as the hours passed away, but he did not awake. Nature was asserting her rights. When he awoke the sun was in mid-heaven. He rubbed his eyes and sat up in bewilderment; but presently consciousness returned, and he recalled the events of the morn-

ing. He was far back in the pasture, in an opening of the woods. No human being was near. Should he go back to the house he called his home? He thought of Mr. Tracy and Amelia, of Miss Jordan's kindness, and resolved to return; but then, overpowering all, came the vision of the hard, old man, with the iron-gray hair; the broad, brown woman, and their anger at the loss of the cow.

"Why, they can't bear the loss of a cent!" he mused. "They'll half kill me if they lose a cow."

In this indecision he once more arose, and sauntered listlessly through the woods. He scanned the recesses in search of the lost animal, but his mind was occupied with other subjects. He was thinking of Miss Jordan's advice.

"Oh, dear!" he moaned, suddenly, "I've a mind to go home. I wonder if father would be cross? Miss Jordan said he would be like the father of the prodigal son, and I am the prodigal son himself. How I look! An old straw hat with a hole in the brim, a colored shirt, a pair of blue overalls, no stockings, old shoes! What would father say to me? I ought to go to the house and get my new clothes, but I can't. Mr. Higglesey would be angry with me for being gone so long, and no cow yet.

They are cross enough by this time, I warrant. No, I'll not go near them. Miss Jordan says I ought to go home and begin a new life. She says I can live so nobly, and so grandly, that people will forget I have ever done wrong. She says I must have a high purpose to do right; that I can become an honor to my parents, and an honor to God. Can I? How late it is! It must be afternoon. I wonder what they're doing at the house?"

Distracted by conflicting emotions he walked very much as the frog leaped from the well,—two steps one way, one step back again; but ever the two steps were further from Mr. Higglesey's, the one step toward; and therefore he slowly progressed till he reached the borders of the farm. Here he leaped the fence and stood upon another man's land. From that moment he was free. First he ran, then he walked, crossing other fences, till he came to a highway which he was confident would take him home.

People met him in the street, and thought he was some strolling vagabond. He saw them stare at him, and became conscious that, although his apparel might answer for the hay-field of Mr. Higglesey, on the high road it gave him the appearance

of being a beggar. Shame caused him to droop his head. Besides, he was very hungry. Once more he was upon the road, penniless. But now it was summer. He could sleep in the fields, if needs be, and to-morrow he would reach home. There he would go down on his knees in penitence, and would implore forgiveness.

Thus he walked on, but as he went, and realized that he was drawing nearer to the ordeal, that he must meet his father's sternness and answer the thousand questions that would be asked him, he paused again. There was a bend in the road just there, and a huge rock jutted out in the corner. He passed behind the rock, picked a few blueberries which were growing on bushes between the ledges, crawled under the rocky shelf, and looked out upon the setting sun. It was going down in splendor, and its last rays found him in his nook. The summer evening hum lulled his senses to quiet.

"Everything is happy but me," he said. "Why is it? I know. Because everything but me does right. If I had done right, I, too, should be happy."

Then a little voice whispered, "Begin now. Pray."

He started. He thought he heard his grandmother's voice. That was almost the last word she had ever said to him, and now his imagination heard it repeated with startling distinctness, — "Pray."

He looked in the sky for a moment, and out from the red sunset gleams came visions. The good within him struggled with the evil. The contest was severe, but the discipline of the months through which he had passed had strengthened him, and the good triumphed. He turned his back to the sun, faced the darkness of the little cave behind him, knelt, and prayed. Such an outpouring of soul he had never known before. He continued thus a long time, till darkness enshrouded him; then, laying his head upon the rock where he had knelt, he fell asleep.

He awoke in the morning with new thoughts. He would not go home, but would go to his grandmother's. Her voice had called him, her face was before him. But it was a long way, and he had no money. Then he remembered that in "hay-time" farmers were often glad of extra help, and he started forth. At the first house he made his application; but they wanted no boys. The second attempt also failed; but at the third he succeeded. He told a

part of his story, and worked here two days. He had a kind master, and an abundance of nourishing food. At the end of the second day he received his money,—the first he had looked upon since he left his home.

The next morning he sought a depot, and was borne to his grandmother's town. Indecision again came parleying, deterring him from his purpose; but with a vigorous thrust he pushed it back, looked up to God, and said, "I will go." He lingered about in the corners, waiting for the darkness to hide his rags, then started for the quiet farm. It was late when he reached the house. There was no light; but he knew his grandmother's window, and stealthily approached it, under the shadow of the projecting roof.

This was the noise which attracted the good woman's attention as she lay thinking of her lost grandson. He heard her come to the window, but then his courage failed, and he shrank back. She saw him not. Then she returned to her bed, and all was still again. He waited, but heard no sound. Noiselessly he crept to the window and looked in. Her eyes were open, and she saw the falling shadow.

"What can it be?" she asked herself. "There is certainly some one there."

Once more she hastened to the window, but the timid boy drew back again. She was not to be foiled, however, and, throwing up the sash, she looked out. There he stood, with the old straw hat pushed down over his face, and his eyes drooping. She did not know him.

"Who are you?" she asked, sternly. "What are you doing here?"

A faint sigh escaped him, and she knew the sound. Her heart told her, and thrusting forth her arm, she grasped him.

"Jotham!" she said, hurriedly. "Jotham! Is this you?"

"Yes, grandmother," was the faint response.

She did not scream, for she was a woman of strong common sense, but she drew him suddenly to the window, — pushed the old hat from his forehead, looked in his face and said, —

"My Jotham! I knew you would come back. And you have come to grandmother first. You have done right. Grandmother will befriend you. Come in, now. I will open the door. Come in, darling. The dove has come back to its cote.

Come in and tell me where you have been all this time. Annette and Harry are sleeping upstairs. Come to the door, and I'll let you in."

The sound of their voices awoke grandfather.

"Who's there?" he called, but grandmother could not pause for a reply. She hastened to the door, and when the old gentleman arrived there also, he saw the boy clasped in his grandmother's arms, while tears of joy were raining from her cheeks. Jotham could not speak. So much shame mingled with his happiness, that it was not easy to answer the many questions which came in a breath.

There was little sleep in the house that night, and never afterward could Jotham recall the scene without thrills of gratitude and joy. He was at home and at rest. When he had answered their questions, he asked one in return, —

"Will father forgive me?"

"Yes, my child," replied the grandmother. "Think you he has no longings to see the son from whom he hoped so much?"

Then they told him of Annette's sickness, and of their impression that he had gone to sea. But finally, grandmother changed the subject suddenly.

"Are these such clothes as you wore, Jotham?"

"Yes, ma'am, I worked in them."

"You must not be seen in these. You will be tired to-morrow morning. Sleep till your grandfather can go up town. He must buy you a suit. God be praised that you are here! Henceforth may your life be such as shall fill your parents with pride, and cause your soul to grow in knowledge and in the love of God."

Then the boy told them of Miss Jordan, and confessed the manner in which he had left, and grandmother said, "The Lord sent you such a friend. To-morrow I will write to your father."

"Plead for me, grandmother," said Jotham.

"I have no need," she answered. "Your father will receive you with a loving welcome, and you must prove to him by your conduct that you are worthy his forgiveness. You will no longer have to contend with those boys who tempted you. They brought disgrace upon their father, committed crimes which took half his property to keep them from prison, and now they are all gone West. Father and sons went off together, for Mr. Thompson was proud, and would not stay where so much disgrace had fallen upon him."

The next day two letters came to Mr. Wilson at his business office in the city. One was directed to Annette, but he opened it, for he was sure she would not object. It was from Miss Jordan. The other was from his mother. With the two letters he went home, and then there was joy in that house.

Never again was Mr. Wilson ashamed of his son. Nevermore did Jotham walk in those crooked paths which lead to sorrow. The ordeal through which he had passed served as a life-time warning. The prayer which he had offered under that shelving rock unlocked his heart, and it went upward with a glow which never again was lost. He learned to trust in God, and his future path was upward.

He passed through many trials on his return to his home; but these only developed his mental strength yet more. His companions scoffed him at first; but when they found that he returned to his studies quietly, going to and fro with a determined purpose; that week by week and month by month he kept his even course, gaining the confidence of his teacher, caring not for the temptations around him, but thinking only how he might retrieve the past and rise in the future,—those who

had laughed began to respect him, and to see that an earnest purpose can accomplish all things.

He did not forget Miss Jordan, nor Mr. Tracy, nor Amelia; nor did they forget him. A pleasant intimacy was established. Annette and Miss Jordan became loving friends, Mr. Tracy came to Jotham's home, and in after years Jotham went to Mr. Tracy's home, for Amelia was there, and she was not ashamed to call him her friend.

Only one thing troubled Mr. and Mrs. Higglesey. Mr. Wilson demanded pay for the months during which his son had toiled for them; and, when they were compelled, they put the money in his hands with many groans. So much was taken from their next intended instalment for the bank.

Jotham sat quietly with Annette one day, rehearsing some of the scenes of his absence, when she remarked, —

“All is atoned for, now, Jotham.”

“Not all,” he answered. “When we have done wrong, we cannot make all things right, — can we?”

“We can leave it with God to make all right,” she replied, meekly.

“But, Annette,” he continued, “there is one thing that has always worried me. I have thought of it

when I have been alone, by day and by night. It is of Joseph, who lost his place by my means. He seemed so honest. I did not see him, you know; but the sound of his pleading voice has always haunted me."

"Couldn't you find the place, so we could hear about him?" asked Annette.

"No, Annette, I couldn't. I didn't know where I went. I didn't know the name of the town, and I couldn't find him."

"I am sorry," Annette added.

"I shall never forget it," returned Jotham. "If I could only find him, I would ask father to give him all I earned at Mr. Higglesey's. He ought to have it."

He did find him afterwards, and of this we will speak ere we close.

Jotham had been home a year when he stepped into a hardware store to purchase some article for his mother's use; and while there he noticed a boy of his own age, and heard the merchant call him Joseph. Something in the tone of the lad's voice seemed familiar, and Jotham looked at him closely. He could never hear the name Joseph without thought of that barn and the stolen apple.

Upon his return he told Annette he was sure he had found Joseph. He was sure it was the same voice he had so distinctly heard deny all knowledge of the apple. Inquiries were made, and Jotham was delighted to know he was right; and afterwards, when he had confessed to the injured boy, and received his forgiveness, he was happy, especially as he learned that what at first appeared an injury, proved a blessing, being the means of his finding his present situation, which was far superior to that he lost.

Then Annette said, "You see, Jotham, that by walking in the straight path of truth Joseph was blessed, and He who sees all things gave him his reward. So you, leaving crooked paths, and going steadily in the ways of virtue, will find, ere long, that you, too, will be equally blessed, for thus will the Crook become Straightened."

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

ISSUED AND FOR SALE BY

WILLIAM V. SPENCER,

203 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON.

 *The usual Discount to the Trade.* 

ANDERSON (I. H.) Patriotism at Home; or, The Young Invincibles. By the author of "Fred Freeland." With Four Illustrations, from original designs by CHAMPNEY. Printed on heavy paper, in handsome binding. 1 vol. 16mo. Price \$1.50.

BERRY (MRS. M. E.) Celesta. A Girl's Book. 16mo. \$1.25

———— Crooked and Straight. 16mo. \$1.25.

BRADLEE (Miss). Christus Victor. A Poem. Square 16mo. Flexible cloth. 50 cts.

———— Max Overman. 16mo. Paper. 50 cts.

———— Three Crowns. 16mo. Cloth. \$1.25.

BULFINCH (REV. S. G., D. D.) Manual of the Evidences of Christianity. For Classes and Private Reading. 12mo. \$1.00.

CALVERT (G. H.) Some of the Thoughts of JOSEPH JOUBERT. With a Biographical Notice. 16mo. Tinted paper. Cloth, bevelled. \$1.50.

———— First Years in Europe. By the author of "Scenes and Thoughts in Europe," "The Gentleman," &c. 1 vol. 12mo. \$1.75.

A finished and attractive narrative of a residence in Antwerp, Göttingen, Weimar, Edinburgh, and Paris, forty years ago; abounding in powerful criticisms of the religious and political sentiment of that time, exhibiting a close study of the literature and a familiar acquaintance with the literary men of that age.

CARPENTER (MISS MARY). Our Convicts. 2 vols. in 1. pp. 293 and 380. Octavo. \$4.50.

CHANNING (MISS E. P.) The Adventures of a German Toy. A charming story for children, with three Illustrations. 75 cts.

COBBE (FRANCES POWER). Religious Duty. 12mo. Cloth, bevelled sides. \$1.75.

——— Studies New and Old, of Ethical and Social Subjects. Crown 8vo. Price \$3.00.

CONTENTS: Christian Ethics and the Ethics of Christ; Self-Development and Self-Abnegation; The Sacred Books of the Zoroastrians; The Philosophy of the Poor Laws; The Rights of Man and the Claims of Brutes; The Morals of Literature; The Hierarchy of Art; Decemnovenarianism; Hades.

FERNALD (REV. W. M.) God in his Providence. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.50.

——— A View at the Foundations; or, First Causes of Character. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.00.

GREY (HESTER). Kitty Barton. A simple Story for Children. With One Illustration. 32mo. 60 cts.

HOLLISTER (G. H.) Thomas à Becket. A Tragedy, and other Poems. 16mo. \$1.75.

LINCOLNIANA. In one vol., small quarto. pp. viii. and 344. \$6.00. (Only 250 copies printed.)

MARTINEAU (JAS.) Essays: Philosophical and Theological. Crown Octavo. Tinted paper. \$2.50.

— Other volumes of the series in preparation.

MILL (JOHN STUART). Dissertations and Discussions. 4 vols. 12mo. Cloth. Per vol., \$2.25.

——— The Examination of the Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton. 2 vols. 12mo. Cloth. Per vol., \$2.25.

——— The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth. \$1.25.

MUZZEY (REV. A. B.) The Blade and the Ear. Thoughts for a Young Man. 16mo. Red edges, bevelled sides, \$1.50; plain, \$1.25.

NAVILLE (ERNEST). The Heavenly Father: Lectures on Modern Atheism. By ERNEST NAVILLE, late Professor of Philosophy in the University of Geneva. Translated from the French, by HENRY DORNTON, M. A. Published in a handsome 16mo volume. \$1.75.

"A thorough grappling with some of the most subtle and profound questions of the age. 'The Revival of Atheism,' &c. The author is thoroughly evangelical, and has treated his subjects with a masterly scholarship and ability. We hail all such books as the fulfilment of the Scripture promise, 'When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.'"

REED (WM. HOWELL). Hospital Life in the Army of the Potomac. 16mo. \$1.25.

STAHR (ADOLF). The Life and Works of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Translated from the German of ADOLF STAHR, by E. P. EVANS, Ph. D., Michigan University. 2 vols. Crown octavo. \$5.00.

THURSTON (MRS. ELIZABETH A.) The Little Wrinkled Old Man. A Christmas Extravaganza, and other Trifles. Illustrated. 75 cts.

TOWLE (GEO. M.) Glimpses of History. 1 vol. 16mo. Bevelled boards. \$1.50.

TOWNSEND (MISS VIRGINIA F.) Darryll Gap; or, Whether it Paid. A Novel. 1 vol. 12mo. pp. 456. \$1.75.

A book of great force and power, dealing with the follies, the errors, and the extravagance of this great sensational age. Depicting life among those who have suddenly acquired wealth, and displaying lessons of devotion and self-sacrifice, drawn from a new field, hitherto untrod by the novelist. *The Boston Transcript* says of it:—

“The story is thoroughly American in tone, scenery, incident, and characters; it is to American life what Miss Bremer’s ‘Home’ is to life in Sweden. Like the Swedish tale, simple, natural in incident, its characters have each a powerful individuality which takes hold at once upon the interest and sympathies of the reader. The drama of the story is artistic, and though its materials are drawn from the simple, human, every-day life of our homes, the power of the book is felt to its close; the moral lessons it unobtrusively teaches, cannot fail to sink deep into the hearts of all who read it.”

WARE (REV. J. F. W.) Home Life: What it Is, and What it Needs. 16mo. Cloth. Red edges, bevelled sides. \$1.25.

Recently Issued.

REASON IN RELIGION: By F. H. HEDGE, D.D. 1 vol. Crown octavo. \$2.00.

NEW WORKS JUST ISSUED.

LOVE IN SPAIN, AND OTHER POEMS. By MARTHA PERRY LOWE. 1 vol. 16mo. \$1.50.

SERMONS: By Rev. E. B. HALL, D.D., Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Providence, R.I., from 1832 to 1867. With a brief Memoir. 1 vol. 16mo. \$1.25.

FIRST HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY. From the French of Athanase Coquere’ the Younger. By E. P. EVANS, Ph.D., Michigan University. 1 vol. 16mo. \$1.50.

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF LESSING.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF ADOLPH STAHR, BY E. P.
EVANS, PH. D., MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY.

Two volumes. Crown octavo. Price \$5.00.

"A work of permanent value. . . . It is the best of many books which have been written and compiled for the purpose of portraying the character and career of one of the most illustrious scholars and thinkers that even Germany has produced. It combines judicious selection with ample information, criticism with narration, and presents with comparative brevity an outline of labors, the benefits of which the world is now enjoying in almost every department of learning and culture. . . . The translation is excellent."—*Nation, New York.*

"The position of Lessing in German literature renders him the subject of peculiar interest among those who have at heart a sound intellectual culture in this country. We are thankful to Professor Evans for presenting to our countrymen the biography of such a man in so handsome a form. . . . We can safely predict to our readers that the perusal of the volumes will give them a fresh sympathy with a man whose name has to a great extent been the subject of vague association rather than positive knowledge, and will throw new light on the fortunes of the great battle for freedom and truth in the last century."—*New York Tribune.*

"As a literary biography, it is one of the best specimens which has appeared in many years, and seems to have been a labor of love to both author and translator. We commend these handsome, valuable, and interesting volumes to all inquiring, progressive, and sympathetic minds, and all readers who would become familiar with the noblest type of literary life."—*N Y. Independent.*

"Stahr's biography of Lessing, which he has so admirably translated in these volumes, was the result of 'twenty years of earnest and enthusiastic study.' It is an elaborate account of Lessing's life, works and times, influence and contemporaries, and is a valuable contribution to the literary history of Germany."—*Boston Transcript.*

"A highly honorable contribution to American letters."—*N. Y. Tribune.*

For sale by all booksellers. Copies sent by mail free of postage,
on receipt of retail price.

A liberal discount allowed to libraries, students, and clergymen.

WILLIAM V. SPENCER,
PUBLISHER,

203 Washington Street, corner of Bromfield.

POPULAR BOOKS

Published and for sale by

WILLIAM V. SPENCER,

203 Washington Street, Boston.



PATRIOTISM AT HOME;

OR, THE YOUNG INVINCIBLES.

By the author of "Fred Freeland." With four illustrations, from original designs by Champney. Printed on heavy paper, in handsome binding. One vol. 16mo. Price, \$1.50.

KITTY BARTON.

A Simple Story for Children. By **HESTER GREY.** With one Illustration. 32mo. Price, 60 cts.

THE LITTLE WRINKLED OLD MAN;

A CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA, AND OTHER TRIFLES.

By **ELIZABETH A. THURSTON.** Illustrated. Price, 75 cts.

THE ADVENTURES OF A GERMAN TOY.

16mo. Illustrated. Price, 60 cts.

HOME LIFE:

WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT NEEDS.

By **Rev. J. F. W. WARE.** 46mo. Cloth. \$1.25.

THE BLADE AND THE EAR.

THOUGHTS FOR A YOUNG MAN.

By **Rev. A. B. MUZZEY.** 16mo. Price, \$1.25.

"The best book for Young Men I have ever read."—*Governor John A. Andrew.*

SUNDAY SCHOOL MANUALS.

EARLY LESSONS ABOUT THE SAVIOUR.

Per dozen, net, \$1.25.

ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR.

By the author of "Early Lessons." Per dozen, net, \$1.25.

*** Copies of either of the above, or any book published in the United States, sent by mail, free of postage, on receipt of price. Libraries supplied on most favorable terms.

MANUALS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

EARLY LESSONS ABOUT THE SAVIOR.

By the author of "Many Teachers but one Lesson." Price per dozen, \$1.25.

ALL THE SUNDAYS IN THE YEAR. By

the author of "Early Lessons about the Savior." Per dozen, \$1.25.

MANUAL OF THE EVIDENCES OF CHRIS-

TIANITY. For Classes and Private Reading. Second edition. Per dozen, \$9.00.

NEW BOOKS,

SUITABLE FOR

SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

CELESTA. A Girl's Book. By MRS. M. E. BERRY. Price \$1.25.

CROOKED AND STRAIGHT; OR, JOTHAM AND ANNETTE AT HOME. By the author of "Celesta." Price \$1.25.

AUNT ZELPETH'S BABY. By the author of "The Adventures of a German Toy." Illustrated. Price \$1.00.

GERTY AND MAY. By the author of "Granny's Story Box." With four Illustrations. Price \$1.00

PUBLISHED BY

W. V. SPENCER,

203 Washington Street,

Corner of Bromfield, BOSTON.









UCSB LIBRARY

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
305 De Neve Drive - Parking Lot 17 • Box 951388
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1388

Return this material to the library from which it was borrowed.

APR 16 2007

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 605 485 2

Un